



INSIDE THE TABLOID

NETWORK+
MAKE FRIENDS WITH
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

IN THE TABLOID

**BAD EXAM
RESULTS?**
SUE THE SCHOOL

ESSAY PAGE 18

**THE NEW
WRITERS
OF INDIA**

The surf and turf solution

Deals on fish quotas and beef could herald a breakthrough in Europe

Sarah Helm
Brussels
Anthony Bevin
Political Editor

The European Commission will today offer Britain an outline deal to solve the problem of fish quota-hopping, opening the way for the most important political breakthrough yet in the new Government's relations with Europe.

Government sources also hope that a deal can be reached by the summer to end the ban on some UK beef exports. While there is extreme caution on beef, because expectations have so often been raised and dashed before — not least by John Major after last year's Florence summit — it is now hoped that a start can at long last be made with beef exports from Northern Ireland.

Emma Bonino, the fisheries commissioner, is to hold talks in Brussels today with Jack Cunningham, the Secretary of State for Agriculture, and Elliot Morley, fisheries minister, and will propose ways of limiting the number of quota-hoppers.

The offer of a deal on quota-hopping could help smooth the way to a deal wider negotiations on European Union reform, which come to a head this week, as concerted attempts are made to finalise the Amsterdam treaty, to be signed next month.

Today Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, holds his first meeting with European partners, in The Hague, to discuss the treaty, and, on Friday, Tony Blair meets European heads of government for a mini-summit



in the Dutch town of Noordwijk. According to Commission sources in Brussels, the proposals on quota-hopping centre on ways of ensuring that boat owners, with a license to fish the British quota, must have a connection with a local port or region. About 150 large UK fishing vessels are Spanish and Dutch-owned and crewed, having been bought, often many years ago, from British fishermen.

Mrs Bonino is expected to suggest arrangements under which every boat should land a certain amount of fish at a British port.

The offer is also expected to propose that a proportion of the crew should speak fluent English. Other proposals for linking boats to a British locality will also be discussed.

If accepted the deal could mean that a significant number

of quota licenses and boats held by Spanish and Dutch fishermen go back to British fishermen. In return, Ms Bonino hopes that the Government will agree to enforce cuts in fish stocks by up to 30 per cent, the level set in the latest EU-wide conservation plan.

There were indications yesterday that Mr Cunningham and Mr Morley will look favourably on the Commission

offer. "We will examine all suggestions with interest," said a fisheries spokesman.

Commission officials say hopes of a deal are high, due to the new reasonable tone being adopted by Labour ministers on the fishing question, and an Europe in general.

However, it remains unclear whether the Commission offer will go far enough for the Government to accept immediately.

Britain may still have to seek a change in EU law, during the Amsterdam treaty negotiations, to ensure the proposed restrictions on foreign fishermen cannot be overturned by a breach of EU rules on free movement of people and capital.

Hostilities over quota hopping during the previous Conservative Government caused as much damage to Britain's rela-

tions with Europe as the beef war. Mr Major threatened to veto the Amsterdam treaty unless the entire practice of quota hopping was made illegal under EU law.

Since taking office Labour has adopted an entirely new approach, dropping the threat to veto the Amsterdam treaty and saying the problems of quota-hopping were exacerbated by the actions of the previous gov-

How now, brown cow? The Prime Minister makes a new friend yesterday, as the Government hoped for a resolution of the lengthy dispute over the Common Fisheries Policy, and an end to the EU-wide export ban on British beef appeared closer than ever. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

ernment, which restricted British fishermen from claiming generous subsidies from Brussels to pay off old vessels.

The European Commission has always accepted the fact that foreign vessels can take up to 46 per cent of the British quota of species such as hake and plaice makes a nonsense of the EU policy of national fish quotas.

A solution to the BSE-related beef ban, as well as fisheries, would create an enormous boost to the standing of the new Government — hard evidence that new Labour goodwill can work wonders, while Mr Major's Euro-sceptic approach jammed the works. One well-placed Government source has told *The Independent* it is possible that the logjam could be broken as soon as next month, with Northern Ireland providing the first link in a chain reaction that could then move on to take in some Scottish herds.

While that was always expected to be the case, because of Ulster's computerised system of tracking its cattle, the breakthrough had not been on the table when the Conservatives left office earlier this month.

That is what is now being sought by Mr Cunningham, and Labour sources are hopeful of a breakthrough by the time the Commons breaks for the summer.

Honeymoon is over, page 13



Daughter of the night forces Howard to meet his Nemesis

Nemesis waddled into the Chamber and parked her black bag on the floor. There she sat patiently for over an hour, peering inside an orange folder from time to time, or consulting her electronic pager. Twice she shifted along the bench, both times ensuring that she was sitting directly behind the man she was stalking. Nervous Conservatives pointed at her and giggled.

In classical mythology Nemesis (grand-daughter of Chaos, daughter of Night, and sister of Blame, Woe and Fate), was supposed to have had about her a touch of Aphrodite, and to have carried an apple and the branch of a tree. This one was not so favoured in terms of looks, and would not have suited a single bit of wispy gauze at groin level. Instead her unfashionable cross glistened against her white blouse, and her jacket in the violent blue and green tartan of the Clan Widdicombe, clashed horribly with the decor.

But she was about to undergo a transformation, and most people present already knew it. The butt of popular humour was to become the vehicle of popular retribution.

The formalities of debate had been observed. A blast from the past called David Maclean (the man who once opined that all drunken beggars were Scottish) had attacked the new government by praising his own defunct one, and



DAVID AARONOVITCH

Jack Straw — dismissing this airily — had outlined 100 horrible things that would happen to wicked juveniles under Labour.

Then hush fell, as Nemesis was called. Two rows in front of her the man who had once — and for years — wielded immense power over prisoner and refugee, sat bolt upright, facing

away from her; his lips pursed and his face completely still.

Nemesis had a warning for all. "It should alarm us," she began, in voice like the falling of a guillotine blade, "that the House is now so comprehensively viewed as devoid of honour and a sense of service. Whatever fun the public make of us, no matter how upset they may be by our decisions it is essential for there to be an underlying view that Members of the House are just, honourable and truthful."

But something had happened to make this impossible; and that something had happened on her watch. When she had worked with the former Home

Secretary (her "Right Honourable and Learned Friend") he had misled the House of Commons. Not lied, not fibbed, not told a direct falsehood, but done everything possible to conceal his true actions in the matter of Mr Derek Lewis and the governor of Parkhurst prison.

And he had got away with it because he "has an exquisite way with words." The meaning was nothing, the effect everything.

Mr Howard (still staring straight ahead) had behaved in this way because his "first reaction to attack is denial and refuge in semantic prestidigitations." Semantic prestidigitations? What an epitaph on a modern political career! If there was any one reason why the Tory benches contained such a pitifully small number of MPs, it was because of the voters' feelings about years of "semantic prestidigitations." Or cynicism, as it is also known.

Agamemnon, laid low by an earlier Nemesis, recognised how the Greeks' "arrogant grandeur had made them forgetful of the common cause." Well, tartan will serve as well as gauze to make that point. Yesterday something of the Night certainly touched Mr Howard — the pudgy but righteous hand of Nemesis, the daughter of Night. And the whole of politics shuddered.

Howard scuppered, page 9



Revenge: Ann Widdicombe addressing the Commons yesterday

Brown orders Treasury to open its books

Anthony Bevin
Political Editor
Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Treasury forecasts are to be opened up to independent scrutiny by the National Audit Office, with a clear hint of suspicion that the books were cooked by the Tories.

Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, will announce the unprecedented, independent audit of his predecessor's accounts in the Commons today, and MPs will receive a direct report from Sir John Bourn, the Comptroller and Auditor General, in good time for the summer Budget.

The National Audit Office, Parliament's independent financial watchdog, replaced the centuries-old Exchequer and Audit Department in 1983, with beefed-up powers under a Comptroller whose independence was reinforced by Statute. In 1995, his office audited public funds of more than £500bn; with a standing order to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness, as well as the propriety, of public spending.

But the new role to be picked up by Sir John today marks an historic first — the ability to question the Treasury's most sensitive political assumptions on issues like economic growth.

A Treasury source told *The Independent* last night that Sir

John had been asked to question a number of the "rosy" assumptions made by officials working under the instructions of Kenneth Clarke, the former Conservative chancellor.

In particular, Sir John's officials would be examining the forecast for the underlying trend rate of economic growth, put at 2.5 per cent "over the rest of the 1990s" in Mr Clarke's last Red Book Budget Report. That estimate compares with an average growth rate of 1.7 per cent for the 18 years of Tory rule.

Another assumption being questioned by the Treasury's new management related to the assumption that a "spend to save" investment of £800m in fighting fraud and revenue evasion would reap savings of £6.7bn over the next three years. That assumption could have led to an artificial lowering of the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement.

Mr Brown will tell MPs today that he wants to restore trust, honesty and openness to public finances, and Sir John could now be given a continuing role in reporting to Parliament on future Budget forecasts.

In a speech to the Confederation of British Industry tonight, Mr Brown will reinforce his pledge to be tough on government spending and borrowing and that the Budget next month will look to the long-term needs of the economy.



BEST IN GLASS



BEST IN GLASS

CHERRIE FLOWER SHOW	20-23 May
ROCKSTAR, NATIONAL CITY	29 May-1 June
ROYAL THEATRE, BLACK, ISLE OF WIGHT	31 May
1ST CORNWALL TEST MATCH v AUSTRALIA, EDGEMONT	5-6 June
GARDINER OPERA	18 June-6 July
ROYAL ASCOT	17-20 June
WIMBLEDON TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIP	23 June-6 July
FOUR, VEVE CLICQUOT GOLD CUP, COWDRAY PARK	25 June-29 July
HENLEY ROYAL REGATTA	2-6 July
RAMPTON COURT PALACE INTERNATIONAL FLOWER SHOW	9-13 July

Veuve Clicquot
CHAMPAGNE OF THE SEASON

Sponsors stubbed out
Cigarette company logos are to disappear from cricket grounds, snooker halls and motor-racing circuits under plans announced yesterday to ban tobacco sponsorship of sport.

Slaughter revealed
Codebreakers at the Bletchley Park cipher school cracked Nazi messages revealing the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Jews a year before the Nazis launched the Final Solution.

Desert island dispute
The Spratly Islands barely make it on to maps, or even on to the HMS *Illustrious* radar as the ship passes by. But, as Richard Lloyd Parry reports, these insignificant islands could spark an Asian war.

THE BROADSHEET
Business & City 20-22
Comment 17-19
Crossword 28
Essay 18
Foreign news 11-15
Gazette 16

Home news 2-9
Leading articles 17
Letters 17
Obituaries 16
Shares 23
Sport 25-28
Unit trusts 24

NETWORK + TABLOID
Arts reviews 10-16
Arts 4-6
Concise crossword 14
Listings 12-13
TV & radio 15-16
Weather 14

significant shorts

Radioactive gas 'not to blame' for cancer cluster

Radon gas was yesterday ruled out as a cause of a leukaemia cluster which killed a teenage boy and struck two of his schoolmates. Detailed testing carried out at the school at Camelford, Cornwall, found levels of the gas were within recognised limits for non-domestic buildings. Cornwall has the country's highest levels of radon, a naturally occurring radioactive gas.

Last autumn, the authority revealed investigations concluded that neither the Camelford acid water disaster in 1988, nor electromagnetic fields from an overhead power cable in the area of the school caused the cluster. In the water pollution incident, supplies to 20,000 people in the Camelford area were affected after 20 tonnes of aluminium sulphate was accidentally dumped into the wrong tank at a water treatment works.

Health experts were called in by the health authority after three teenagers in the same 25-strong tutor group at the Camelford school were diagnosed as having leukaemia.

RAF Harrier pilot ejects to safety

An RAF pilot escaped when his Harrier jump jet crashed yesterday. He ejected from the plane which came down in a field near the White Water Reservoir south of RAF Wittering on the Cambs/Lincs border. He was taken to hospital but was not seriously injured.

An RAF spokeswoman said there were no reports of damage to property or injury to people or livestock on the ground. It is not yet known whether the plane was landing or taking off when it crashed. An internal investigation is under way into the loss of the jump jet, which was worth several million pounds.

Two injured in manhole cover blast

Two people were injured, one seriously, when a manhole cover was blown off by a blast yesterday in a crowded street. The incident happened at around 3pm on Newport Place at the junction of Charing Cross Road in London's West End.

A male passer-by suffered 30 per cent burns to his legs in the incident and a woman sustained minor head injuries.

Casualty unit to face axe after all



Hospital campaigners have been left disappointed and "feeling cheated" after the Government announced it would not overturn a controversial Conservative decision to close part of a London hospital. Alan Milburn, Minister of State for Health, yesterday announced a review of services at Edgware Hospital - but insisted the closed Accident and Emergency unit would not be reopened.

The future of Edgware Hospital erupted onto the political stage last year when local MPs Hugh Dykes and Sir John Gort (pictured) threatened to resign the "Tory whip and end John Mayor's majority in the Commons if the casualty unit was closed. Both MPs lost their seats at the general election.

Union boss quits amid acrimony

The suspended general secretary of the largest college lecturers' union has stood down amid allegations of incompetence, leaving his union to embark on its annual conference without a leader.

John Akker, the newly-deposed leader of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education, accepted an early retirement package after a key National Executive sub-committee passed a unanimous vote of no confidence in him.

However, it is understood Mr Akker, who had two years on his five-year contract left to run, may mount a legal challenge against his former union over the procedures used to oust him. His departure leaves NATFHE leaderless for its conference, starting in Scarborough on Saturday. There are understood to be six contenders for the general secretary's post.

Unison outrage at voucher wages

A union leader yesterday called for an inquiry into an old people's home which is part-paying staff in shopping vouchers instead of money.

Buses at Alexandra House in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, said the vast majority of workers were happy with the arrangement. But John Toomey, Unison's regional officer for East Anglia, said the arrangement was "outrageous" and a practice that belonged in history.

Orchid goes public after 50 years

The Lady's Slipper Orchid, Britain's rarest wild flower has gone on public display for the first time in more than half a century after being saved from extinction.

English Nature yesterday revealed the location of seedlings of the orchid after years of secrecy. For 50 years, only one mature Lady's Slipper has been growing in England, and its whereabouts have been one of conservationists' closest guarded secrets.

About 18 months ago, seedlings developed from the plant after more than 15 years of research at Kew Gardens were planted out in five other locations. In a dramatic move towards the plant's revival, English Nature has announced one of the places was along Ingletton Glens Waterfall Walk near Settle, North Yorkshire.

people



IN FATHER'S SHADOW: Aleida, daughter of Che Guevara, at the launch yesterday of a CD of tribute songs written and recorded to mark the 30th anniversary of the revolutionary's death

Barclays chief to lead reform of tax and welfare system

Martin Taylor, chief executive of the Barclays banking group, yesterday became the second top businessman to be drafted in to spearhead Government reforms, after being appointed by the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, to head a task force aimed at streamlining the tax and benefits systems.

But Labour's new-found affinity with business may soon run into controversy. It was revealed earlier that Peter Jarvis, the retiring chief executive of the Whitbread brewing and leisure group, who was in line to chair the Government's Low Pay Commission, was himself paid more than £1m last year. The figure represents around £520 an hour, or over 150 times the £3.20-an-hour level, which he is thought to favour as the threshold for any minimum wage.

Mr Taylor's job comes swiftly after the appointment of Sir David Simon, the former chairman of BP, as minister for trade and competitiveness in Europe. In the Department of Trade and Industry, the latest task force, which will be entirely Whitehall-based, and is expected to last a year, fulfils a manifesto commitment to streamline and modernise the system, to promote work incentives, reduce poverty and welfare dependency, while "strengthening community and family life".

Mr Taylor said he "didn't want a committee of the great and the good"; rather he expected it to consist of himself and four civil servants, one each from the Treasury, the Inland Revenue, the Department of Social Security, and the Department for Education and Employment.

Mr Taylor, an Eton-educated former financial journalist, will give two days a month to the project. He said he would be taking day-releases from outside business, but the challenge would be to "discipline ourselves to keep on the question", which he conceded was extremely broad.

Meanwhile, the latest accounts for Whitbread revealed that Mr Jarvis's basic pay and bonus rose 7.9 per cent, to just under £599,000 in the year to 1 March, but he also cashed in share options which netted him an additional profit of £241,000. The indications from Downing Street are that Mr Jarvis may not now be in the running for the Low Pay job. His candidature has met with considerable hostility from trade union leaders.

Magnus Grimond

Rabbi takes leading role in health debate

At the age of 47, Rabbi Julia Neuberger (right) already has a string of prestigious achievements to her name. She became the first British woman rabbi with a congregation, is chair of the largest community health trust in Britain, and is Chancellor of the University of Ulster.

Now she will be at the forefront of the National Health Service debate after being appointed yesterday as chief executive of the independent think-tank, the King's Fund.

The fund, established 100 years ago by the then Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, and which employs around 200, is a respected forum for new thinking in health policy. Under Rabbi Neuberger, the organisation is expected to take a more pro-active role in health policy, at a time when the new Labour Government begins its own restructuring of the NHS.

Rabbi Neuberger said yesterday she was "thrilled" to be appointed. "I have always had enormous respect for the work of the fund."

She added: "As the new Government begins its programme, there are very substantial and challenging issues to be faced for health care in its widest sense, including social care and housing."



both in London and throughout the country.

Already a fellow of the King's Fund Management College, Rabbi Neuberger was also quick to refer to the body's "commitment to the principles of social justice and to support bold and innovative work."

Her appointment, which brings with it a salary of more than £90,000, was approved by the charity's president, Prince Charles, and was the unanimous choice of the management committee, out of around 100 original applicants.

One of her early priorities when she takes over from current chief executive, Robert Maxwell, in December, will be to help reduce the fund's overspend, which last year reached £780,000.

Michael Streetier

Hawking launches supercomputer

Professor Stephen Hawking yesterday admitted he was wrong to predict 17 years ago that, by now, scientists would have developed a unified theory explaining the structure of the universe - but then forecast that in 20 years' time they will.

Professor Hawking was speaking at the official launch in Cambridge of a new supercomputer able to model the earliest moments of the universe after its creation, 15 billion years ago.

Speaking through his speech synthesizer, the physicist - who suffers from motor neurone disease, said he had hoped physicists and mathematicians would have developed a "grand unified theory" for the universe by 2000.

Such a unified theory - tying together and explaining the interaction of universal forces such as gravity and electromagnetism - has eluded generations of great minds, including Albert Einstein.

The new £2m computer, called Cosmos, could play a key part in that by allowing theoreticians to model the growth of the universe from its earliest moments. "The calculations involved are so enormous they require a state-of-the-art machine," said Professor Hawking.

The computer - contains 32 individual processors and 8,000 megabytes of main memory

Charles Arthur

briefing

EDUCATION

Ban on interviews urged to stop selection by schools

Pre-admission school interviews should be banned to reduce covert selection by comprehensives, says a new paper published today. The controversial assertion by academics at the London School of Economics would mean that schools such as the Oratory, the London grant-maintained school attended by the Prime Minister's son, would no longer be able to interview pupils and parents to confirm their religious affiliation.

Schools which do not stick to their published admissions criteria should be fined, the paper also proposes.

David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, has promised a review of admissions policies to ensure that they are fair and open after a recent Audit Commission report said admissions were in "gridlock".

At present, church schools and opted out schools are free to decide their own admissions policies. One in five parents fails to get their first choice of school. The fairest system, says the paper, would be for one body - probably the local authority - to control all admissions in an area.

Judith Jude

SPENDING

An 'Upstairs, Downstairs' life

Researchers are predicting a return to the "Upstairs, Downstairs" society after finding that domestic service was the single fastest growing item of consumer spending over the last decade.

Households spent £18bn on nannies, home helps, cleaners, gardeners, and window cleaners in 1996, according to the new edition of the *Lifestyle Handbook* from the Advertising Association. The domestic services category has grown by almost 150 per cent since 1986, mainly reflecting the needs of working parents for child care. The category only just grew faster than spending on education - attributable to the replacement of student grants by student loans.

Other increasingly popular items were CDs and video tapes, which grew by 118 per cent over the 10 years, and cinema spending, which grew by 111 per cent. The biggest fall in spending was on coal, television and video repairs, shoe repairs, sugar and television rental.

Domestic service was the 11th highest total spending category for UK consumers in 1996. Tip was hushing at £76bn and second was leisure, at £62bn. Consumers spent £51bn on food.

Consumers' top 10

1. Housing
2. Leisure services
3. Food (household)
4. Motoring
5. Household goods
6. Alcohol
7. Clothing and footwear
8. Leisure goods
9. Financial services
10. Personal goods and services

SOCIETY

State fails to narrow poverty gap

Government spending on the welfare state has done little to offset the growing divide between rich and poor. Only just over half of all expenditure, on health, education, housing subsidies and social services, benefits the poorer half of the population, according to a study published today by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The research into spending since 1979 finds that the value of the "social wage" - the income in kind received from welfare services - was only 20 per cent higher for the poorest fifth of the population than the richest fifth, when differences in age and sex are taken into account.

The limited degree of redistribution achieved by the welfare state is explained by the fact that although expenditure on housing and social services is heavily weighted towards the poor, spending on higher education benefits the most prosperous.

Even allowing for the social wage, the gap between the richest and poorest households grew markedly wider between 1979 and 1993. The income of the poorest fifth, in cash and kind, grew by up to 13 per cent, compared with a 60 per cent increase for the richest households.

The Changing Distribution of the Social Wage, Summary available from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 01904 629241 or www.jrf.org.uk.

Diane Coyle

DIET

8 million Britons eat their greens

The number of vegetarians in Britain is growing by more than 5,000 every week, according to a survey. It also claims that more than 8 million people in Britain have cut red meat completely from their diet.

The study was conducted for Realeat, a food company which caters for vegetarians. It concludes that 13,000 people a week are removing red meat from their dinner tables, while more than half of the population have reduced the amount they consume.

For more than nine in five of those questioned, the BSE scare was the primary reason for dietary change. According to the research, three million people are now vegetarian, with the proportion of male vegetarians at its highest since the annual survey began in 1984.

James Mellor

Read
THE INDEPENDENT
online every day on AOL
Call 0800 376 5376
for FREE software - quote "Independent"

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up 41.2% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1996

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD	
Austria £50.00	Netherlands £55.00
Belgium £50.00	Italy £45.00
Canada £50.00	Madagascar £50.00
Denmark £50.00	Malta £45.00
France £50.00	Norway £45.00
Germany £50.00	Portugal £50.00
Greece £50.00	Spain £50.00
Ireland £50.00	Sweden £45.00
Japan £50.00	Switzerland £50.00
Latvia £50.00	USA £30.00
Lithuania £50.00	

its own restructuring of the NHS. Rabbi Neuberger said yesterday she was "thrilled" to be appointed. "I have always had enormous respect for the work of the fund."

She added: "As the new Government begins its programme, there are very substantial and challenging issues to be faced for health care in its widest sense, in-

Charles, and was the unanimous choice of the management committee, out of around 100 original applicants.

One of her early priorities when she takes over from current chief executive, Robert Maxwell, in December, will be to help reduce the fund's overspend, which last year reached £780,000.

Independent State

ASSURED

...BECAUSE DIRECT DEBIT IS THE MOST CONVENIENT WAY OF PAYING BILLS AND SHOULD YOU EVER NEED TO, DDs ARE EASILY CANCELLED. JUST CONTACT YOUR BANK.

UK BANKS AND BUILDING SOCIETIES

DIRECT Debit

DD YOUR DOUGH

Spor

ALFRED D. MASTER

Firms from

Private n

From Abrams

Medical Corporation

Private nursing

groups will raise

ing to offer

service, under

announced this

proposals will

promises to

owners. A

Although deta

still being

to cause

authorities

again

and planning

educators. It

voluntary

Since 1 April

four-year-old

per year for

tem for their

they could

private

group

argued that

Sports sponsorship goes up in smoke

Dobson sets out plans to cut tobacco use

Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

Cigarette company logos such as the Marlboro cowboy are to disappear from cricket grounds, snooker halls and motor racing circuits under plans announced yesterday to ban tobacco sponsorship of sport.

Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, declared his determination to include sport sponsorship in a forthcoming Bill to outlaw tobacco advertising after a week of uncertainty over whether it could be incorporated in the ban.

Ministers were known to be concerned about the impact on the sports affected by the loss of hundreds of millions of pounds of sponsorship. But Mr Dobson said the impact on public health was greater.

"We recognise that some sports, like some smokers, are heavily dependent on tobacco sponsorship. We will therefore give them time and help to reduce their dependency on the weed."

A White Paper setting out the Government's plans to cut smoking would be published together with a draft Bill to ban tobacco advertising. The White Paper would explore every possible lever of government, including "changes in the law, taxation, education and publicity to reduce tobacco consumption".

Mr Dobson told the Royal College of Nursing's annual conference in Harrogate, that plans to reduce smoking would be the centrepiece of the Government's commitment to improve the nation's health.

He said the Government had no

wish to harm the sports affected but they had to face reality. He was less charitable to the tobacco industry which, he said, was unique in killing 120,000 of its own customers every year. "So it has to recruit 120,000 new smokers to its ranks each year."

It was unclear how international sporting events in the UK or shown on television here would be affected, but Mr Dobson said later: "My understanding is that if a car is running at the grand prix here it won't be carrying tobacco advertising."

The move surprised medical organisations who had not expected it so soon. The Cancer Research Campaign said: "This is a day we never thought we would see. We are really pleased the new government has honoured its pledge so early on."

Dobson health pledge, page 10



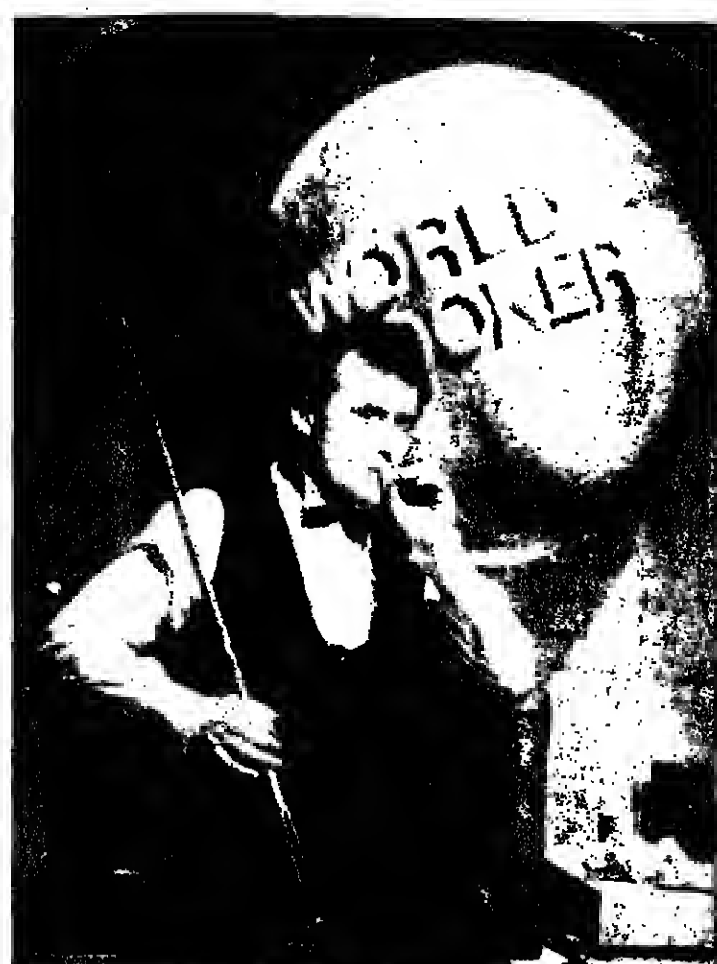
Eddie Irvine in his Marlboro-sponsored Ferrari, one of the Formula One teams which will be hit by the planned ban. Photograph: Allsport



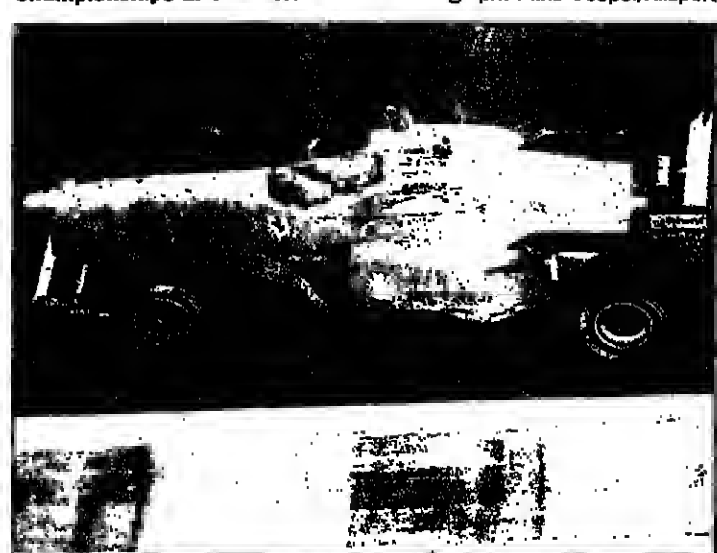
The golfer Nick Faldo at the Alfred Dunhill Masters in Ball in 1994. Photograph: Mike Cooper/Allsport



The Silk Cut yachting team. The brand's parent, Gallaher, also sponsors through Benson & Hedges. Photograph: Empics



Jimmy White takes a drag at the Embassy World Snooker Championships in Sheffield. Photograph: Mike Cooper/Allsport



The Marlboro logos on Michael Schumacher's Ferrari had to be covered up at last year's French Grand Prix. Photograph: Empics

Firms braced for stampede from the losing teams

Paul McCann,
Andy Farrell and
Mike Rowbottom

Companies are bracing themselves for a rush of sports administrators knocking on their doors looking for new sponsorship cash to replace the £9m a year spent by tobacco companies.

There are currently 34 sports events sponsored by tobacco companies in the United Kingdom and countless individual team sponsorships in all manner of sports. The deals range from the £250,000 a year that the little-known Ice Hockey Superleague receives from Benson & Hedges to the £20m international deal between Rothmans and the Williams Formula One team.

Tobacco money is estimated to be worth up to £200m in Formula One, whose organising body is planning to float on the stock exchange later this year.

Benson & Hedges' links with their chosen events go back many years. The B&H Masters, in snooker, began in 1975; the B&H Cup in cricket started in 1972; there has been sponsorship of golf - the B&H International - since 1970.

More recently they have provided the B&H Cup in Ice

Six of the best deals

Sponsor and event	Value
Embassy: Snooker, World Championships	£54m
Rothmans: Motorsport, Williams team	£20m
West Brand: Motorsport, McLaren team	£12m
Benson and Hedges: Motorsport, Jordan team	£10m
Benson and Hedges: Snooker, B&H Masters	£4m
Silk Cut: Rugby League, Challenge Cup	£2.1m

Deals as of May 1997

Hockey (1992) and, through Silk Cut, another branch of its parent company Gallaher, there has been sponsorship of the Rugby League Challenge Cup since 1985.

Industries such as financial services, mobile phones and computing are being talked about as the ones to replace the tobacco money. However, as one sponsorship executive said: "It is dangerous to believe there is a queue of people waiting to come in and replace tobacco."

Barrie Gill, of the sponsorship agency CSS, said: "When Silk Cut pulled out of Hickstead this year horse jumping lost an event."

John Lord, chief executive of the Ice Hockey Superleague, predicted a "mad scramble for money". He said: "Most sports are constantly looking for new sources of revenue. Now every-

one will be redoubling their efforts all at the same time."

The sponsorship industry believes the timing of a sponsorship ban will be crucial. Some sports, such as cricket, have already cut their dependency on tobacco funding while snooker and darts remain heavily dependent.

The snooker manager Ian Doyle said yesterday: "If the ban was to take effect immediately it would be our worst nightmare."

The tobacco industry's sponsorship has been held back to within the rule of inflation since a voluntary agreement with the government in 1972. The agreement prevents the industry sponsoring sports that attract a young following, such as football, or what is known in the industry as "puff" sports such as athletics, swimming or cycling.

The voluntary agreement also limits the use of cigarette names and logos on Formula One cars in the British Grand Prix, although they can use the sponsor's colours.

Tobacco sponsorship of sport dates back to the early 1960s when snooker and motor racing were sponsored by the industry because it could not advertise on television.

Mike Scott, director of the Institute of Sports Sponsorship, said: "Tobacco has been instrumental in the development of sports that did not have public exposure or even their own national tournament. Sport sponsorship is now more developed in the UK than in the rest of Europe, but it will still be hard for minority sports to replace the lost money."

The Tobacco Manufacturers' Association has requested a meeting with Frank Dobson, but has yet to receive a reply.

A spokesman said: "We believe there is no justification for any erosion of our ability to compete in the market place. Our sponsorships increase the reputation of our companies, and also increase brand awareness. But there is no convincing evidence that banning sponsorship and advertising has any effect."



You're used to successful meetings. So are we.



Hotels.com

Private nurseries to get state aid

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Private nurseries and playgroups will receive state funding to offer places to four-year-olds under plans to be announced this week.

The Government hopes the proposals will help it to fulfil its promise to abolish the Tories' nursery voucher scheme. Although details of the plan are still being finalised, it is bound to cause anger in some local authorities which had hoped to regain control of the funding and planning of pre-school education. It will, however, be welcomed by the private and voluntary sectors.

Since 1 April, parents of all four-year-olds have been entitled to vouchers worth £1,100 per year for pre-school education for their children, which they could spend in a state or private school or in a playgroup. Labour has always argued that the scheme was



too bureaucratic and that it should be abolished. Ministers want to see the programme replaced by September, but they face a tight schedule to put their own plans into place by then. The scheme will remain in place until March 1998 in Wales and August 1998 in Scotland, but this is unlikely to happen in England.

Each area will be expected to

draw up plans showing how it can provide a place for every four-year-old, though it is thought unlikely that this will be left entirely up to local authorities. Instead, government guidance could insist that private schools and playgroups be given places on nursery forums which would bid for funds for each area. This, it is hoped, would ensure that they featured strongly in the proposals.

One of the problems the Government faces is preventing authorities from using their greater muscle to win the lion's share of funding for themselves. Under the voucher scheme, local authority schools were accused of cramming four-year-olds into their reception classes to get the extra cash which followed them.

Conversely, authorities which have always funded nursery education fear they could lose out because a larger share of the cash could go to those with very few under-fives in education.

Labour's nursery education policy, published last November, said that public-private partnerships would be set up to ensure the planning and provision of nursery places. However, the extent to which the private and voluntary sectors will be involved has never before been made clear. Party sources had talked about using partnerships with business to help build new nursery centres, but had not specified that a Labour government would fund places for children in private schools.

Last night a party source said ministers hoped to build on suggestions made by its nursery education task force last year.

Margaret Lochrie, administrator of the Pre-School Learning Alliance, formerly known as the playgroups' association, welcomed the news that its members would not automatically lose the funding they had gained from vouchers, but said there was "a certain amount of worry" about the changes.

Virgin train fares rise 15%

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

A private train company run by Richard Branson's Virgin group has raised the prices of some of its cheap "walk-on" fares by six times the rate of inflation.

The 15 per cent rise by Virgin CrossCountry on rides from England to Scotland using Super Saver tickets, which can be used on any day except Fridays and summer Saturdays, will, according to pressure group Save Our Railways, mean the end of affordable, turn-up-and-go train travel.

Scheduled to be introduced in June, the new prices will mean that some tickets which do not allow passengers to travel on a Friday will be more expensive than tickets which do. A spokesman for CrossCountry said: "Some fares are rising by 15 per cent. But many other ticket prices are coming down."

Mr Branson, who took over the running of £100m CrossCountry services last year, has to increase ticket sales by 10 per cent in order to make the line profitable. His business plan is based around airline-style marketing. This means that a number of low-cost tickets have been heavily promoted by the company - but all require passengers to book their journey at least a day early and to specify outbound and return trains.

"The price of tickets which you have to book in advance are falling by 10 per cent. There will always be people who want an open-type ticket and they will have to pay a premium," said a spokesman.

Barry Doe, the transport consultant who uncovered the new pricing regime, claimed that the "days of just taking the first train that turned up are numbered."

The increases are being brought in on all "anglo-Scottish" fares controlled by CrossCountry. This will affect cheap returns to Scotland from Wales, the South West and most of the Midlands and the North West.



Fragrant bloom: The violinist Vanessa Mae sitting in the EMI music garden at the Chelsea Flower Show, which opens today Photograph: David Rose

Sawar to sue over bribery allegation

Stephen Goodwin

Mohammad Sawar, the Labour MP for Glasgow Govan, yesterday instructed solicitors to issue a writ against the *News of the World* as he fought to shake off allegations of bribery and election irregularities.

Standing on the steps of his solicitors' office in central Glasgow, Mr Sawar, Britain's first Muslim MP, said the newspaper charges against him were "totally false".

It was claimed that Mr Sawar paid £5,000 to the Independent Labour candidate, Badar Islam,

in "compensation" for going easy in his campaign in order not to split Govan's substantial Asian vote.

The normally flamboyant Mr Islam, who polled 319 votes, was not to be found yesterday. As stories of the former professional cricketer's record of debts, gambling problems and business failures emerged, he was said to have left the country.

Mr Islam's absence from Govan was entirely in keeping with the bizarre drama that has been unfolding ever since Mr Sawar, a millionaire businessman, announced his inten-

tion to stand for the Glasgow seat more than three years ago.

Mr Sawar welcomed the police investigation called for on Sunday by Donald Dewar, Secretary of State for Scotland, but said it would be wrong of him to comment further until the police inquiry was completed.

"I have no intention of allowing these events to interfere with my duty to represent my constituents," he said. The MP spent yesterday morning in talks with shop stewards and management at the Kvaerner shipyard. He was, he said, more concerned with securing Clyde-

side jobs than "giving these type of stories any time".

Strathclyde Police confirmed they had added the bribery investigation to on-going inquiries into an extraordinary rush of late entries to Govan's electoral roll - more than 200 of the new voters were Asians in the ward represented by Mr Sawar on Glasgow city council.

Police officers yesterday interviewed Peter Paton, an Unofficial Labour candidate on 1 May and long-standing critic of alleged electoral practices in Govan. Mr Paton and Jamil Abassi, who stood as an inde-

pendent Conservative, both claim to have been offered four figure inducements by Sawar supporters.

"The politics of the Indian sub-continent is being grafted on to the streets of Govan and it is totally repugnant to me," said Mr Paton. "We have to restore democracy in Govan and root out the wrong-doers in our midst."

If Mr Paton gets his wish and either the police or Labour Party inquiries lead to a re-run of the election, the ultimate beneficiaries could be the Scottish Nationalist Party, which twice won the old Govan seat.

Saudis try British nurses for murder

Jojo Moyes

Two British nurses accused of murdering a colleague at a Saudi Arabian hospital appeared at the opening session of their trial yesterday, handcuffed and with shackles on their ankles.

Deborah Parry, from Alton in Cheshire, and Lucille McLauchlan, from Dundee, arrived in a police van at Khobar Supreme Court at noon dressed in traditional black Saudi robes. Escorted by their lawyer, Salah al-Hejailan, and flanked by a dozen policemen, the two women, hampered by the shackles, walked slowly into the courthouse through a side door.

Ms McLauchlan appeared healthy and relaxed, but Ms Parry looked drawn as they entered the courthouse to appear before a three-judge tribunal. Also present was the British Consul, General William Patey. Police prevented the Press from entering the courthouse.

Ms Parry, 41, and Ms McLauchlan, 31, face the death penalty, possibly by public beheading, if convicted of killing 55-year-old Australian nurse Yvonne Gilford. They have been in detention for nearly six months.

Ms Gilford's body was found last December in her room at the King Fahd Military Medical Complex in the eastern Saudi town of Dhahran, where the three worked as nurses. Saudi authorities said the nurse had been stabbed four times, beaten and suffocated.

Lawyers from the Interna-

tional Law Firm, which is representing the victim's family, attended the hearing, which lasted for two hours but made no comment. In an atmosphere described by one legal source as "increasingly difficult", British lawyers are understood to have been instructed by the Foreign Office not to speak publicly about the case.

The women have been jailed in the nearby city of Dammam since their arrest. If convicted they could face public beheading by the sword, the first time Western women would have been executed in the conservative Islamic kingdom.

Under Islamic law, which is enforced in Saudi Arabia, the victim's family has the right to demand the death penalty or accept blood money. Last month, Frank Gilford, the brother of the victim, turned down an appeal from the nurses' lawyers to waive the death penalty if the nurses are convicted.

A total of 39 people have been executed in Saudi Arabia so far this year, with six beheaded yesterday alone for crimes ranging from theft to drug smuggling.

Saudi police said the nurses had confessed to the murder and that the confessions had been filed with Saudi judges. But Mr Hejailan's firm said they did so only because they were told it would mean they would not face prosecution and could go home. He said the women had withdrawn their confessions, and one of them retracted a statement that she had had a lesbian relationship with the victim.

Starting up a business? Find out why we're the number one choice.



Whatever type of business you start up, it's never easy. While you may be very good at the business you've chosen, there are so many things to consider and this can be really daunting.

If so, let NatWest lend a hand. We're the first choice for small businesses and have helped thousands to start up and grow.

This experience has meant we've been able to develop a service that provides you with some tools that are so important in the early days.

- Free help and guidance from a NatWest Small Business Adviser.
- Free Banking for up to 18 months.*
- Free Business Start-Up Guide.
- Free 'Help for Your Business' directory.
- Free Businessline, a telephone banking service.
- 25% discount on registering a business name.*

To find out more or to open a Small Business Account, talk to the Small Business Adviser in your local high street branch. Alternatively you can call us on 0800 777 888.

If you're starting-up, there's only one choice. NatWest, the bank for small businesses.

NatWest
More than just a bank

*National Westminster Bank Plc, 41 Leithurst, London EC2P 2BP. Registered Number 929027 England. Regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IPRG. Member of the NatWest Life and NatWest Unit Trust Marketing Group advising on the life assurance, pensions and unit trust products only of that Marketing Group. 12 months' free banking is available to start-ups where you are in credit or go overdrawn if you do not pay more than £5,000,000 out of your account per annum. 18 months' free banking is available if you also complete and supply a certificate from a start-up training course provided by a suitably accredited training provider recognised by NatWest. "Free banking" only includes charges for paying money into and out of your account, and for running it - it does not include, for example, overdraft interest or related charges. Businessline - you will have to pay for the cost of the phone call. 25% discount on business name registration is offered by Business Names Registrations Plc when you open an account between 1/4/97 and 30/6/97. NatWest is not liable for any loss caused by delay, failure or error made by Business Names Registrations Plc. We may monitor and record your phone calls with us in order to maintain and improve our service. Ref. No. 96297

Jews massacred in Holocaust test-run

John Crossland

British codebreakers at the Bletchley Park cipher school cracked Nazi messages revealing the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Jews a year before the Nazis officially launched the Final Solution.

Sixty-two top secret decrypts of wireless traffic of the SS Ordnungspolizei, or non-party uniformed police, which revealed the "unspeakable activities" of Hitler's Einsatzgruppen or "action squads" in occupied Russia, were released yesterday at the Public Record Office New.

The documents call into question how much Churchill's government knew about the Nazi atrocities. But Dr John Fox, lecturer in Holocaust studies at Jews' College in London, whose discovery of parallel files in the American archives forced the British disclosure, said yesterday: "These decrypts could only have been seen by a select few in the Cabinet. A lower-ranking Foreign Office official Roger Allen wrote on 25 January 1942: 'I suppose no one will ever be able to establish the facts about the German occupation of Russia.'"

"This proves that the Foreign Office was not privy to the facts and in fact the decrypts were kept in a drawer until much later and were used as background evidence in preparing charges against alleged war criminals in the 1980s."

In addition, the release intriguingly highlights the revelation by Sir Harry Hinsley to his official history of wartime intelligence that the Ordnungspolizei suddenly adopted a more difficult hand cipher in September 1941, temporarily baffling Bletchley Park.

On 13 September 1941, the day after Bletchley decrypted the ciphers that the Nazi murder squads had bragged about "one of their greatest successes in liquidating 1,549 Jews", SS general Kurt Daluege - in charge of ethnic cleansing in the aftermath of Operation Barbarossa - signalled his commanding officers: "The danger of decryptions by the enemy of

Transcripts raise doubts over how much Churchill knew of Nazi atrocities in the early years of the war

wireless messages is great. For this reason only such matters are to be transmitted by wireless which can be considered open, but no information which contains state secrets or calls for a specially secret treatment. In this category fall exact figures of executions." The euphemism for mass executions was to be "action according to the usages of war".

Within days Bletchley announced "although an entirely new form of cipher was inaugurated for the Russian messages continuity in the breaking of the previous keys made it possible to break into the new ones too and whereas up till 12 September only three had been broken, since then only one has remained unbroken".

The codebreaker wrote: "In Kremenshug on 30 October 1941 'the action' was on a scale exceeding even the previous brutality of the German police." The local commander, Jeckeln, gave permission for the massacre of local Jews "and we may suppose that the butchery went on all night".

Planning for the systematic murder of Jews, which Hitler regarded as a test run for the Holocaust, began as soon as the attack was launched on Russia.

The SS high command was even prepared to accept inflated figures for victims as long as they thought they were Jews. On 4 August, two months after Barbarossa, an SS report stated "the operations of the SS Reserve (Cavalry Brigade) continues with a further 3,600 executed so that the number carried out by them amounts to 7,819; a total exceeding the 30,000 mark."

The codebreaker comment-

ed: "The tone of the message suggests that ... a definite decrease in the total population of Russia would be welcomed in high quarters and that the leaders of the three sectors [of the Einsatzgruppen] stand somewhat in competition with each other on their 'scores'."

Among the papers' other revelations is the fact that a train load of 1,296 Hungarian Jews was dispatched to Auschwitz in August 1943 for experiments into malaria, under the control of Himmler's Special Commissioner for combating animal pests.

There were also details of the plunder of Russian art treasures by squads controlled by the Foreign Minister Joachim Ribbentrop. The greatest prizes were reserved "for the use of the higher Nazi bosses in their villas; the lesser bosses had to be content with rare books and costly vases."

The discovery last week of a painting from the Amber Room of the Tsar's summer palace outside St Petersburg, is highlighted by a report that the palaces there had been robbed of their artistic treasures.



Records released at Kew reveal that 1,296 Jews were sent to Auschwitz, pictured after liberation in 1945, for malaria experiments. Photograph: AFP

Call for inquiry into care homes

Louise Jury

Residential care home owners are calling for an independent government inquiry into the Buckinghamshire abuse scandal which ended with a string of convictions last week.

Angela Rowe, the director of two homes in Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire, was convicted of ill-treating mentally disabled residents. Two other former members of staff, Lorraine Field and Desmond Tully, were also found guilty of ill-treatment.

The Association for Residential Care, which represents home owners, said yesterday that lessons must be learned for the future.

James Churchill, its chief executive, said: "The regulatory framework failed vulnerable residents over a long period of time. All agencies must learn from this case."

The association intends to

raise the matter at a meeting planned with Paul Boateng, the minister with responsibilities for the mentally disabled.

Among the questions it wants answered is why the ill-treatment, which included mental, physical and sexual abuse, was allowed to continue for 10 years before social services ordered a full report.

Although Buckinghamshire social services has said its lawyers advised against closing the homes after the abuse was discovered, the association believes de-registration should have been carried out. It repeated calls for a new national inspectorate, independent of social services departments.

Mr Churchill said: "This case proves that locally controlled inspectorates are not up to the task of protecting vulnerable people in such cases."

"How can we have any confidence that it is not happening somewhere else?"

DAILY POEM

Pillow Talk

By Linda France

I am the keeper of your dreams,
that white horizon, the cut cord.

I am cradle, cot and playground,
a fairy-tale of wolves and wishes.

A third of your life you'll give to me.

Come, lie naked between my sheets.

Aren't I an expert in sweat and secrets,
your body's lost-and-found,

its best three-letter word?
I'll be roses and daisies forever.

And ever. Rest in me.

This second selection from Linda France's new collection *Storyville* comes from its "Home Movies" section, about "the life in art and the art in life". *Storyville* is published by Bloodaxe Books, £6.95.

RENAULT OWNERS

COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE FROM
£99

Low Cost Insurance for Renaults

Call our National Quoteline on

0345 123111

All Calls Charged at Local Rate

Ask for a quote on the Internet: <http://www.hhh.co.uk>

Hill House Hammond
Over 250 Branches Nationwide

With our integrated phone, fax, scanner, copier and printer you get an extra two feet on your desk.

Increase your efficiency. Don't get a PC, get an SF-4200. It's a phone, a paper, a photo-copier and, when linked to a PC, a PC fax, scanner and brilliant colour printer. Because it's all in one, there are no compatibility problems, it's easy to use, it saves time, it saves money and it saves space. Some feat, don't you think? For details of the Multifaceted call 0800 521852. Samsung Technology that works for life.

SAMSUNG

Always a great idea.

THE DRIVE OF YOUR LIFE

THE NEW PEUGEOT 306. NOW WITH IMMOBILISER.
FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 0345 336 306



For Sergeant and
For Army

Howard a second

Colin R. ...

ST. JOSEPH
HOSPITAL

Rev

هكذا من الاصل



Charm offensive: Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness holding a press conference outside the Houses of Parliament yesterday

Photograph: Brian Harris

Sinn Fein chiefs bask in glory of being MPs for the day

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

As a day out, Gerry Adams yesterday could recommend his visit to the House of Commons. "Thank you," he told Philip Wright, the assistant Serjeant-at-Arms, who acted as his minder, "it is the most restful period I've had for 25 years."

Having refused to swear the oath of allegiance to the Queen, Mr Adams and Martin McGuinness could not take their seats in the Commons, or draw their salaries as MPs.

However, they were given their run of the building to enjoy the facilities for 24 hours, before the Speaker's ruling comes into effect denying them the privileges of MPs in the Palace of Westminster.

They were shown the Chamber by Tony Benn, the veteran Labour MP, and the seats they might have occupied had they been prepared to say the oath, even with their fingers crossed, like Tony Banks.

As MPs for the day, the Sinn Fein president and his chief negotiator were each issued with House of Commons photo-passes, bearing the distinctive three green stripes accorded to Members, which entitled them to roam at will, without the inconvenience of having to go through the anti-terrorist bomb check at the entrance to the Commons.

They did not take advantage of the House of Commons bar for a quick drink, and thought it wise to avoid the MP's rifle range, but they availed themselves of the subsidised canteen. Sitting on the MPs' side of a partition in the oak-lined Strangers' Cafeteria, Mr Adams and Mr McGuinness sat down to a lunch of fried haddock at £2.25 with parmentier potatoes (35p) and swede (35p) and extra helpings

of potatoes for 35p. The Sinn Fein president splashed out on a small bottle of Côtes du Rhône 1995 red wine for £1.85, while Mr McGuinness had a can of Coke for 35p.

After 40 minutes, they went out for a stroll on the terrace of the House of Commons, overlooking the Thames. They spent 15 minutes in deep conversation, only breaking off to ask when the ITN film crew would turn up to film them from Westminster Bridge.

A pack of news reporters followed their every step, including waiting outside the gents. When he re-emerged, Mr Adams was asked for an autograph by one of the consultants in a party following the TQM Piers Merchant.

"How can you speak to him?" said one of her friends. "How dare he say hello to me," said another.

Mr Adams continued on his charm offensive with the fourth press conference of the day on the steps of the Commons. "We didn't come here for concessions. We came here for our rights, and to assert our rights. We are pleased with what we have achieved today."

They had to raise their voices to be heard above a Bible-puncher with a bowler hat, who bellowed out readings from the Old Testament. It was not Ian Paisley, but the Unionist leader was clearly there in spirit.

Mr Adams today will be responding in detail to the keynote speech on Northern Ireland by Tony Blair. Mr McGuinness, meanwhile, is preparing to lead a Sinn Fein delegation to meet government officials. But their immediate target is the local elections in Northern Ireland tomorrow, which provided the real backdrop for the day trip to the Commons.

Tory leadership: Ex-minister delivers fatal blow to former Home Secretary

Widdecombe: The man who misled House without lying

Kim Sengupta and
Fran Abrams

Michael Howard's hopes of leading the Conservative Party were scuppered last night when his former deputy accused him in Parliament of "semantic prestidigitation". In a scathing performance heard by MPs largely in fascinated silence, Ann Widdecombe delivered blow after blow to the credibility of the former home secretary.

Mr Howard sat apparently impassive on the Opposition front bench as his former minister of state ended both his political career and her own. "My Right Honourable and Learned Friend has an exquisite way with words," she said, accusing him of displaying immense skill in misleading the House without ever actually telling an outright lie. She then went on to



Widdecombe: Relentless

add that Mr Howard "has a problem in that his first reaction to attack is denial and refuge in semantic prestidigitation". The only heckling from government benches came as Miss

Widdecombe admitted she should have resigned over the sacking of the former director of the Prison Service, Derek Lewis. Mr Howard should have been open with his fellow MPs about his disagreement with Mr Lewis in 1995 over the suspension of the governor of Parkhurst Prison, she claimed.

"He could not do so, of course, because he had dug a hole for himself over policy and operations, and he would never have had to dig such a hole had he been prepared to keep the director-general in place," she said. Mr Howard's actions had cost the taxpayer quarter of a million pounds.

Miss Widdecombe praised the achievements of Mr Lewis, which had transformed the Prison Service from a desperate situation. "It was for those reasons that ministers, very senior

civil servants, the Prisons Board and its non-executives urgently advised the then home secretary that he should not sack Mr Lewis. It was for those reasons that two out of four non-executives resigned in protest."

Mr Howard had drawn a distinction between policy and operations at the Prison Service to save himself from the firing line following the Learmont Report. Miss Widdecombe told the House. As a result, she claimed, he misled the House over whether he threatened to instruct Mr Lewis at a meeting over the fate of the Governor of Parkhurst, John Marriot.

She posed these crucial and potentially damaging questions to Mr Howard: "Why did he say he had not personally told Mr Lewis that Mr Marriot should be suspended immediately, when he had?"

"... Why did he say that he was giving the House a full account when he knows very well that important issues which were being discussed in the House were in fact omitted from the minutes which he laid before them as a full account?"

"Will he now, in order to clear any doubt at all that may exist in the minds of Honourable Members, ask the current Home Secretary to release the full transcript of the meeting?"

Mr Howard, who promised to

reply in detail to the allegations later on in yesterday's debate on home-affairs aspects of the Queen's Speech, was backed by another of his former ministers, David Maclean, who is backing Mr Howard's leadership bid.

It had been a great honour to work with Mr Howard over a five-year period in two different departments, he said. "He is a man of integrity who gets my full respect not because he was my boss but because I believe he is a decent man and deserves it."

Howard: I'll submit to a second election contest

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Michael Howard last night tried to shore up his collapsing leadership challenge by letting it be known he would subject himself to a second election if elected as the leader of the Conservative Party by the 164 Tory MPs.

Friends said the former home secretary said he would put himself up for a fresh election if new rules were introduced for a one-member one-vote franchise of the whole party. "He is personally attracted to one-member one vote. That is why he would be prepared to re-submit himself for election were a new set of rules agreed," said a member of the Howard camp.

Mr Howard's campaign was derailed by Ann Widdecombe's allegations, said one right-wing Tory MP. "He has been completely derailed. He won't get any more support now. The interesting thing is how many promised votes he loses."

But there appeared to be unstoppable support growing last night for a widening of the franchise after the current election is over. Edward Leigh, a



Howard: Bid for support

rightwing MP, said he was standing for the chairmanship of the 1922 Committee with a pledge to support one-member one-vote selection of the leader in future.

There was also growing support for delaying the leadership

election by a couple of weeks to enable the chairmen of Tory associations to have a say in the choice of the new leader, pending more radical changes.

Sir Norman Fowler, a former party chairman, is backing a move by Robin Hodgson, chairman of the voluntary arm of the party, the National Union, to enable the chairmen of the associations to carry 20 per cent of the votes in the election. The offer by Tom King to stand as a caretaker leader of the Conservative Party was rejected by John Major and the camps surrounding the main candidates for the leadership. "He wants a new leader as soon as possible," said one of Mr Major's friends.

The former defence secretary put himself forward to allow a wider cross-section of the party to have a vote in the selection of the leader. But the idea flopped at Westminster. "It

would be the worst of all worlds," said one senior member of the Hague camp. "And it would not stop the campaigning."

A Howard supporter said: "There will have to be a deal. If we go ahead on June 3 it will look rude to the party associations. We don't want to be accused of riding roughshod over the views of the party."

There is growing support for the leadership rules to be changed to allow one-member one-vote democracy within 18 months, but in return the MPs are demanding a central membership list, and central control over the selection of candidates by the constituencies, to stop "a repeat of Tilton", where Neil Hamilton refused to stand down over sleaze allegations and lost to Martin Bell. "You can still have coffee mornings, but we need to modernise the party," said the Howard backer.

ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPICE

MARE ST. LONDON E8 4SA
(Charity Ref. No. 231323)

Since 1905 we have shared the grief and eased the pain of countless suffering souls. Last year alone 900 found peace with the help of your vital gifts. Most of them died of cancer - but so severely that you would hardly know. Your concern is as encouraging as your generosity and we thank you for your inspiring trust.

Sister Superior.

Rewarding work with children

Today, over 2 million children worldwide are successfully mastering mathematics with the popular Kumon method.

Kumon's success is due largely to the care and devotion of our ever expanding team of instructors. Each instructor works part-time on a self-employed basis running a study centre in their local area. Since first opening in this country demand for new Kumon centres has increased dramatically. We now need many more instructors and are looking for enthusiastic people to train in helping children learn the Kumon Method.

We are currently looking for instructors throughout the UK. Introductory meetings are held in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol and Glasgow.

Training is available in London and Manchester.

For a free information pack call Stephen Ward on 0181 343 3307.

KUMON MATHS

KUMON EDUCATIONAL UK, ELSCOTT HOUSE, ARCADIA AVENUE, LONDON N3 2JD. TEL: 0181 343 3307. FAX: 0181 343 2857.

DIRECT LINE INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNT

	£1- £4,999	£5,000- £9,999	£10,000- £24,999	£25,000- £49,999	£50,000- £99,999	£100,000+
Direct Line Instant Access Account	4.50%	5.00%	5.60%	5.75%	5.00%	6.10%
Halifax Solid Gold (30 Day Notice)	3.00%†	3.25%	4.00%	4.50%	4.60%	4.60%
Woolwich Premier 90 (90 Day Notice)	N/A	3.50%	4.20%	4.80%	5.10%	5.90%††
Nationwide Capitalbuilder 90 Day	4.00%†	4.30%	4.50%	4.80%	5.10%	5.10%

All rates are gross* and correct as 12th May 1997. Source: Moneyfacts. †Rate effective from £500. ††Rate effective from £200,000.

- Whatever you're saving for you'll get it quicker if you save with Direct Line.
- Especially since our rates have recently risen again.
- And with Direct Line you get instant access to your money as well as higher rates.
- The more savings you have the higher our rates get.
- You can pool your savings with family or friends for even higher returns.
- So make the most of your savings, move them to Direct Line.



DIRECT LINE
SAVINGS

0181 667 1121

0161 833 1121

0141 221 1121

LONDON

MANCHESTER

GLASGOW

CALL ANYTIME 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm Saturday. Please quote ref. IND79

www.directline.co.uk • ITV Teletext page 377.

Dobson pledges fairness on health

Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

A drive to end inequalities in health and reintroduce fairness to a system that had lost sight of it will be at the centre of the Government's plan for improving the NHS, Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, said yesterday.

New hospitals, more clinical staff and a focus on the health problems of the disadvantaged were among eight pledges Mr Dobson made, adding: "If we succeed, we will be able to come up with the sound bite 'Vote Labour, live longer'."

However, giving his first public speech as secretary of state, Mr Dobson made it clear that delivering on Labour's pledge to dismantle the internal market would take years rather than months, to allow experiments with alternative arrangements to be tried and evaluated.

Ending "two-tierism" and the other aspects of the internal market would require a "two-stage rocket" with some immediate measures - common hospital waiting lists for patients of all GPs, both fund-holders and non-fund-holders, is one possibility - while others would take longer.

"I am sure most people in the NHS would want us to get on with it quickly, but I am also sure they would like us to get it right," Mr Dobson said.

Speaking to the Royal College of Nursing's annual conference in Harrogate, Mr Dobson announced an end to the unpopular system of local pay under which staff in each NHS trust negotiated a local addition to the national pay award.

The system, introduced three years ago and intended to make trusts sensitive to local market forces, was suspended last year

because of criticism that it was unfair and unwieldy.

Local pay had failed, Mr Dobson said. To applause, he added: "It has proved unpopular and divisive. It has dissipated goodwill and negotiations have consumed effort vastly disproportionate to the minuscule sums involved."

Renewing his warning that there would be no large pay increases, he said work would begin immediately on devising a new national pay system "with appropriate local flexibility". But he refused to spell out what this might mean. The RCN said supplements such as London weighting and those already paid in certain shortage specialties could be extended.

In a speech that was long on symbolism but short on strategy - and rapturously received by his 1,500-strong audience - Mr Dobson declared war on the "gross inequalities in health" associated with poverty, unemployment and homelessness, a personal commitment he is known to share with Sir Kenneth Calman, the Government's Chief Medical Officer.

Every government department would be charged with contributing to improving the nation's health, he said. The release of proceeds from council house sales to build new homes, proposals to build 250,000 young people off the dole and to introduce a national minimum wage were the first steps. "We are committed to a root and branch attack on the things that systematically make our people ill," he said.

Evoking the spirit of an Aneurin Bevan, the NHS's founder, he said that the health service was important not only for the care it provided but also for the principle of fairness it embodied.



Style gurus: Bruce Oldfield watches as supermodel Sarah Thomas and Norwich players Keith O'Neill (left) and Darren Eadie try out the new kit Photograph: Andrew Burman

Canaries to get designer plumage

Clare Garner

It may be the only promotion they get for a few years, but at least Norwich City players can relax in the knowledge that they have been elevated to the Premier League of haute couture.

For the Canaries' trademark green and yellow strip has been redesigned by none other than Bruce Oldfield, who has come up with a new, "clutter-free" look for next season.

"It was a question of toning the strip down, taking away rather than adding things,"

said Oldfield at the strip's launch in London yesterday. "It really is stream-lined. Everything is smaller. The shirts are smaller, the arms are smaller. They just looked like a sack of potatoes before."

The strip, which includes the logo of the First Division club's new sponsor, Colman's, was modelled by the players, including Darren Eadie, who learnt on Friday that he had been called up to the England squad.

The players did their best to look stylish as they kicked about a football on the catwalk, but it was Sarah Thomas,

the 17-year-old supermodel, who showed them how it was done. Ms Thomas, who has taken over from Helena Christensen in the latest Cover Girl cosmetics campaign, agreed to fly back from Australia to model the designer creation in exchange for two season tickets for herself and her father, Peter.

Ms Thomas, a longstanding Canaries fan, believes that Oldfield's strip could catch on. "People will want these as a fashion statement," she said. Asked if she thought the colour combination would be in vogue this season, she

replied optimistically: "You never know."

Anyone who wants to acquire an Oldfield label for their wardrobe can buy the new shirt in August, when it goes on general sale.

The designer kit came about after Delta Smith, the television chef who became director of Norwich City last year, approached Oldfield.

At the end of last season morale at the club was "terrible", she said. But now, she added, "We've got the right ingredients". She added: "Today is an important day in the history of Norwich City. We have

a fabulous new strip and a new sponsor in Colman's, a company with a special link with the city of Norwich and one of the classic English food brands."

Oldfield, whose celebrity clients include Melanie Griffith, Charlotte Rampling, Joanna Lumley, Jerry Hall and Gemma Khan, is bracing himself for the sight of his mud-stained creations after a match. "I was a bit worried about that," he admitted.

Asked if he was a Norwich City fan, Oldfield joked: "I am now. I was a Middlesbrough fan, but after Saturday..."



Old look As worn by Robert Fleck

Special Launch Offer Multimedia & Internet PC

...NOW WITH ADDED

Are you looking for...

- A fully featured Multimedia PC?
- An Internet Super Surfer?
- An Award Winning PC Company?

Then take a good look at the MESH ZipMedia! Starting from only £1149 + VAT, these fantastic Pentium Systems give you...

£1149
+ VAT
£1350.08
inc. VAT

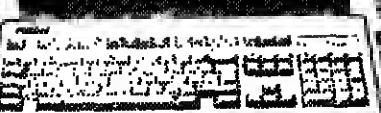
zip
drive
inside!

3D Graphics Sub System

With 2Mb of Synchronous Graphics Ram (SGRAM) our ATI 3D card can deliver fantastic graphics either through our crystal clear 15" Digital Colour Monitor or even through your own Television set.

12 Speed Multimedia

When you buy a multimedia PC you need to know that your CD ROM drive gives fast access to programs and that your soundcard & speakers will deliver solid, faithful audio production.



With an Iomega ZIP drive as standard you get:

- 100Mb per Disk
- Unlimited storage
- Easy Backup - drag and drop on a Zip disk
- Move files on Zip Disks - take your files anywhere
- Swap files with millions of zip users
- Internet Download - safe & unlimited
- Consolidate 70 floppies on 1 Zip disk
- Run Multimedia - install and start directly from a Zip disk
- Zip is 20 times faster than a floppy

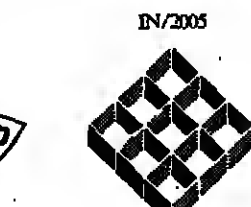
MESH ZipMedia

- Intel 150MHz Pentium Processor
- 16 Mbyte SDRAM
- 2.5Gb Fast Access E-IDE Hard Disk
- 3D Graphics & 15" Colour monitor
- 12 Speed Multimedia
- 33.6K Voice capable Fax/Modem
- Fitted with the amazing new 100Mb IOMEGA ZIP DRIVE as standard

Intel 150MHz Pentium Processor • SoundSource Vero 16 Sound Card • Stereo Speakers • Windows 95 • Lotus SmartSuite 97 • Serif PagePlus 4 DTP software • 12 months Parts & Labour Warranty • All software is pre-installed and based on original media receipt. Please Internet access and 24hrs

PROCESSOR UPGRADE OPTIONS

- 200MHz £1249 + VAT
- 166MHz MMX £1249 + VAT
- 200MHz MMX £1349 + VAT



MESH
COMPUTERS PLC

MESH House, Aspley Way, London NW2 7HF
Tel: 0181 452 1111 Fax: 0181 208 4493
E-mail: sales@meshplc.co.uk
www.meshplc.co.uk

TO ORDER CALL 0181 452 1111

With a TSB
Cash Gift Mortgage
you could get up
to £6,000 to spend
as you like.

If you need a mortgage, be totally sensible and come to TSB. You could get a cash gift of up to £6,000, enough to make your new home look like a million dollars.

Call TSB PhoneBank to find out more or to get a free quotation.

Alternatively, you can call into a TSB branch.

Call free quoting ref. INF1.

0500 758 000

Mortgages

TSB We want you to say YES

Typical example: an existing TSB mortgage customer who is moving and taking out a new £40,000 mortgage on a property priced at £80,000. 300 monthly interest payments are £214.48 at TSB's standard variable rate, currently 7.25% (APR 7.5%). The total gross amount payable is £113,022. It is assumed that TSB Property Plus, TSB Mortgageplus, TSB Homebuyers Plan and a Cash Gift of £1,200 have been taken. Typical fees included are legal fees £110 and a valuation fee £80. Tax relief at 15% on £50,000 is assumed. The monthly endowment premium is £91.45. Available subject to status on Endowment Repayment or pension basis. Minimum loan to qualify for Cash Gift is £15,001. TSB Homebuyers Plan is a unit linked qualifying endowment policy (please remember the value of units can go down as well as up and is not guaranteed). Full details of the TSB Homebuyers Plan are available from TSB Life Limited, Chatter Place, Andover, Hampshire SP10 1RE. The Cash Gift must be repaid if within the first five years the mortgage is redeemed or converted to another TSB mortgage. If the loan is partly redeemed, the Cash Gift must be repaid on a proportionate basis. Assignment/assignment of a suitable life policy may be required by the Bank as security. A TSB cheque account is required. Applicants must be aged 18 or over. All loans subject to status. Not available in the Channel Islands. Written quotations are available on request by calling 0500 758 000. Calls may be recorded and monitored. TSB Bank plc and TSB Bank Scotland plc are representatives of the TSB Marketing Group which is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority only for TSB life insurance, pensions, unit trusts and offshore investments. Advice or recommendations relate only to the investments of the TSB Marketing Group. TSB Bank plc, Victoria House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BZ. Registered in England and Wales. Number: 1089266. TSB Bank Scotland plc, Henry Duncan House, 120 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4JN. Registered in Scotland. Number: 96237.

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

مكتبة من الامم المتحدة

Jospin defies the odds to give Chirac an unexpected battle

John Lichfield
Tulle

Five minutes before Lionel Jospin is due to appear, the local Socialist Party organiser is growing increasingly anxious.

Has no one bothered to turn up for the rally because of the long holiday weekend? Has the nationwide electoral sulk reduced the attendance to embarrassing poor levels? Not a bit of it. His concern is that the Salles des Fôtes might collapse under the weight of people pushing into the old building to see the Socialist Party leader.

"It can't possibly take it," he mutters. "It'll be a disaster, a disaster."

This is Tulle, in Corrèze, President Chirac's home département, but still they come pouring in on a sunny bank-holiday weekend to see "Lionel". They are mostly middle aged, or elderly, and mostly well-dressed; this is by no means a working class audience. On the other hand, according to local party officials, it is by no means a gathering of activists either.

With less than week to the first round of the French parliamentary elections, Lionel Jospin, even here in the heart of enemy territory, is beginning to pull in the crowds.

The publication of opinion polls has been banned since the weekend: the final polls suggested that the loose alliance of the left (Socialists and Communists combined) and the governing coalition of centre-right parties are running neck and neck, with around 38 to 40 per cent of the vote each. A couple of polls even put the left slightly ahead. The presumption of all the pollsters is that transfers from the far right National Front (which has 13 to 15 per cent) will hand the election to the present government by about 40 seats at the second round on 1 June.

But the electoral arithmetic of turn-out, survival of candidates into the second round, and transfers of votes, is impossibly complex. As Mr Jospin tells the audience in Tulle, no one can be sure of the outcome. "There is still everything to play for... I cannot tell you who will win, but the pollsters cannot tell you either."



Crowd-puller: The French Socialist Party leader Lionel Jospin taking time out for a picnic on the campaign trail in Avignon

Photograph: Brian Harris

This was a snap election which Mr Jospin - unprepared, with a muddled programme, and over-reliant on the Communists - was supposed to have had little chance of winning. The state of the final polls is already a considerable victory for the Socialist Party leader, and a rejection, whatever the final result, of President Chirac's gamble in calling the election nine months early.

If the polls in the final days continue to drift leftwards (they are still taken, although not published in France), the President may yet be forced to send his unpopular Prime Minister,

Alain Juppé, to the political guillotine to appease the crowds.

In the meantime, despite the nationwide lack of interest in the holiday-interrupted election campaign, Mr Jospin has once again proved himself an exclusively effective campaigner. Just like the presidential election in 1995, he has defied predictions of his early demise.

Mr Jospin is likeable rather than charismatic; drily precise, almost literary, rather than barnstormingly eloquent. But he manages to convey passion, warmth and wit. By contrast, even the the government's sup-

porters despair of the cold and limp performances of the Prime Minister, Mr Juppé. The centre-right has been badly missing the passion and energy of President Chirac, whose elevated office prevents him from making more than the occasional sortie on to the battlefield.

In Tulle, Mr Jospin amuses the uncomfortably squashed audience by chiding them for coming to see him. The President, in his wisdom, had ordained a short, early poll, interrupted by holiday weekends, he said, so that the French people need not bother their heads with politics. It was very

ungrateful and obstinate of them to turn out for a politician, and especially a man of the left.

However, the Socialist Party leader makes little attempt to defend his own programme: a curious mixture of commitment to markets, Europe and state reform and reversion to statist solutions (a mandatory 35-hour working week; creating 700,000 jobs for the young, half of them in the public sector). Under pressure from the Communists and radical left, Mr Jospin has moved to a position of EMU-scepticism, promising, in effect, to renegotiate the terms of the single currency.

If Mr Jospin is the next French Prime Minister - a possibility not yet to be excluded - would he swing to the right again, to accommodate his cohabitation with President Chirac?

Or would the leftward tug of the Communists and radicals helping to give him a parliamentary majority, leave France in a strange left-right, Euro-positive-Euro-sceptical twilight?

Mr Jospin is honest, intelligent, and likes to do what he promises to do. As Prime Minister, he would find it difficult to be all three.

significant shorts

Afghan killings weaken alliance against Taliban

Troops rebelling against a warlord in northern Afghanistan ambushed and killed a provincial governor and 15 of his guards. An uprising against the warlord Rashid Dostum could weaken the alliance fighting the Taliban religious army, which swept into the Afghan capital, Kabul, in September and now controls roughly two-thirds of Afghanistan. Maulvi Abdul Qadus, governor of Samangan province, and his men were ambushed by troops loyal to Malik Pahlawan, the leader of the rebellion against Mr Dostum. AP - Islamabad

Nine die in Albanian violence

Nine people were killed in the previous 24 hours across Albania and tension remained high in the southern port of Vlorë. Albania's near-anarchy has claimed more than 700 lives, many accidentally, since state arsenals were looted during unrest in February and March. Two people were killed by masked gunmen at a café in Vlorë and two passengers in a passing bus were hurt. Tension was high in the town, as one of the victims was the deputy of a local gang leader and a revenge attack was feared. Frightened Vlorë residents have refused to send children to school although two armoured vehicles of the Italian-led multinational force, which is protecting aid supplies, were patrolling the town's central boulevard. Reuters - Vlorë

War-crime suspect on rampage

A man suspected of bank robberies and war crimes beat up a news photographer while Serbia's chief of secret police watched, the victim said. Predrag Mitic, of the *Dnevni Telegraph* newspaper, said he was attacked on Sunday while taking pictures of Zeljko Razmatovic, alias Arkan. Razmatovic and secret police chief Jovica Stanić were attending a memorial for another senior police official, Radovan Stojicic, who was assassinated last month. AP - Belgrade

Kurds counter-attack

Kurdish guerrillas launched surprise attacks in south-east Turkey as thousands of Turkish troops chased Kurdish rebels in the Iraqi mountains. The military, which also kept up an offensive inside Turkey, has killed 17 Kurdish guerrillas over the past four days in the south-east. Anadolu news agency said. The rebels briefly blocked a main road linking Diyarbakir to the Iraqi border and burned two oil tankers. AP - Diyarbakir

Comrade back in Mongolia

The leader of a former hardline Communist Party won Mongolia's presidential election, according to preliminary official results, giving a setback to forces that brought democracy to the country seven years ago. The victory was seen as a backlash against rapid free-market reforms that the governing coalition is using to dismantle the nation's centralised Communist economy. The reforms have sharply raised unemployment and inflation. AP - Ulan Bator

Anzac donkey gets his gong

A donkey named Murphy was posthumously decorated for bravery, 82 years after it carried wounded Australian soldiers to safety at Gallipoli. In a ceremony conducted by the Australian Deputy Prime Minister, Tim Fischer, an army donkey mascot called Simpson accepted the Purple Cross Award on Murphy's behalf. Stretcher-bearer John Kirkpatrick and his donkeys, the most famous of which was Murphy, became war heroes for carrying wounded soldiers to safety under Turkish fire at Gallipoli in 1915. Reuters - Canberra

Does your dandruff shampoo let you use any shampoo you want?

The trouble with most anti-dandruff shampoos is that you have to use them every time you wash your hair. That's why Neutrogena have developed a shampoo that goes on working even when you're not using it.

Neutrogena Long Lasting Dandruff Control Shampoo is so effective, you only have to use it once a week.

Which means that, for the rest of the time, you can still use all your favourite shampoos.

Neutrogena Long Lasting Dandruff Control Shampoo keeps dandruff away for longer.

For a free trial pack call
0800 628 629.

Quote ref: D05



Neutrogena®

first direct

Free from charges

Banking with First Direct is free because we do not charge Cheque Account customers for everyday banking transactions, even if you're overdrawn. And all our customers automatically receive an overdraft up to £250 - also free of any fees. So compared to other high street bank accounts you're better off with First Direct from day one. We're a member of the HSBC Group which is one of the largest banking and financial services organisations in the world, and in the course of a year you'll find we offer more cost effective current account banking. And the service we provide means you benefit in many other ways too.

By telephone, 24 hours a day

We provide the ultimate in convenience. You can bank with us at any time, 365 days (and nights) of the year, from wherever there's a telephone, in your home, office or car. And all UK calls are charged at local rates.

Personal and professional service

Every call is answered by our Banking Representatives. They have all their need at their fingertips to deal with your day-to-day banking needs. And when you require more specialised assistance, such as a loan, they can instantly refer you to someone who can help.

Getting cash is easy

Every Cheque Account customer receives the First Direct Card. This allows you to withdraw up to £500 a day from over 12,500 cash machines around the UK, including those of Midland. It also guarantees cheques for £100 and includes the Switch payment facility.

So is paying bills

Our service includes a free bill payment service. Simply call, tell us who to pay, how much and when, and we do it. This means you can arrange to pay your bills at the most convenient time without the need to keep having to remember to organise it.

A full banking service with more benefits

As well as our Cheque Account we offer saving, borrowing, travel and insurance services cost effectively by telephone. Take saving: our rates are always competitive, we offer transfers to and from your Cheque Account. So your money is always working hard without the need for you to do the same.

We work hard to maintain the service

The best people to demonstrate the quality of a banking service are its customers - 87%* of ours have recommended us to their friends and colleagues in the last 12 months.

Opening an account is easy too

We also appreciate how daunting changing bank accounts can be. So we make it easy. Easy to open a First Direct account, then easy to arrange for your salary to be paid in and easy for all your standing orders and direct debits to be transferred to your account. And it's easy (and free) to find out more right now. Call us on 0800 24 24 24 or complete the coupon.

Why pay to bank when First Direct is free?

Annual current account charges

(all amounts for use of £250 overdraft)

Lloyds Classic £96.00

NatWest Current Plus £60.00

Barclays Bank Account £60.00

First Direct Cheque Account £0.00

If you're paying more are you with the right bank?

0800 24 24 24

Call free or complete the coupon and post to:
First Direct, FREEPOST, Leeds LS98 2RF

Mr/Ms/Miss/Ms or Title

Surname

Forename(s)

UK Address

Postcode

Telephone No

BB770

No plain sailing in desert island dispute

The Spratlys are unimpressive, but these tiny specks of rock could spark an Asian war

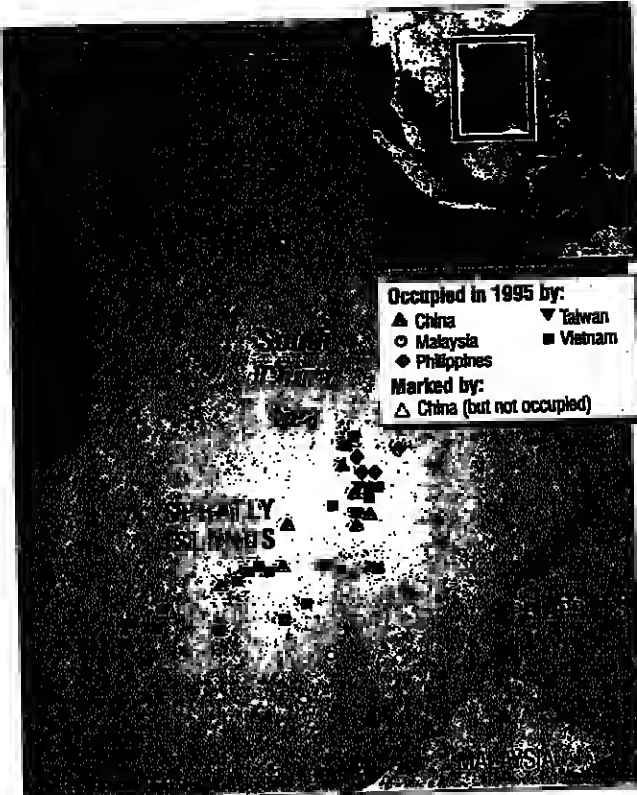
Richard Lloyd Parry
On board HMS *Illustrious*,
South China Sea

Spratly Island is scarcely a dot on the map. This and the other islands of the Spratly group are too low to make much of an impression, even on radar: the Royal Navy aircraft carrier HMS *Illustrious*, presently on the Asian leg of an eight-month long series of exercises, will steer carefully clear of them, marked on the charts as Dangerous Ground and speckled with the names of long-dead Englishmen.

Up close the islands are hardly more impressive than the dots on the charts on the bridge of the *Illustrious* - a collection of 230 shoals, spits and reefs spread over 180,000 square kilometres of the South China Sea.

In photographs, the Spratlys resemble the archetypal cartoon desert-island-with-palm-tree, with occasional huts on stilts built as shelters for passing fishermen.

But the impression of isolated obscurity is misleading. In a region that has more than its



share of disputed islands, the Spratlys are the most disputed of all, a stubborn source of tension which is looking more and more like a serious obstacle to peace in the region.

Unlike the bilateral dis-

agreement over the Kurile Islands (Russia and Japan) or the trilateral one over the Senkaku/Diaoyu group (Japan, China and Taiwan), the Spratly problem is a six-way dispute.

Nineteenth-century British

sailors may have named the islands, but the dispute over their ownership is an exclusively Asian one. China, Taiwan and Vietnam claim the entire group; Brunei, Malaysia and the Philippines claim parts of it.

There are some 40 military garrisons on the islands, more than half of them Vietnamese, and all the claimants, apart from Brunei, have at least one airstrip. Several times a year, the simmering diplomatic tension between the rivals bubbles up into a physical stand-off: only last week, Peking accused Manila of violating Chinese sovereignty after Filipino fishermen hoisted a flag over the shoal, and a group of congressmen sailed there and asserted Philippine sovereignty.

In several ways the dispute looks like a model for the new kind of conflict which is likely to plague East Asia over the next few decades. Unlike Asia's Cold War flashpoints, there is no ideological dimension to the dispute. Apart from the garrisons, the Spratlys have no native population to be won over to one political system or another. The struggle now being waged is for control, not of people, but of resources in the fastest growing, energy-poorest region in the world.

A quarter of the world's shipping passes through this area every year - the Spratlys' position in the middle of the South China Sea thus gives the islands an obvious strategic importance. The narrow sea lanes of south-east Asia link the established markets of Europe with the fastest growing economies in the world. Seventy per cent of oil consumed by Japan, Korea, China and Taiwan is tankered through here from the Middle East, a proportion likely to increase to 95 per cent by 2010.

The secret hope of Spratly claimants is that the islands contain large reserves of oil, or at least of natural gas. Surveys so far have been limited and inconclusive. But the islands certainly have ample living resources. Half the world's fish supplies are caught in Asia, but growing demand and dwindling stocks are increasing competition between nations. The area around the Spratlys is rich in fish, an important consideration



Naval gazing: A helicopter hovering over the aircraft carrier HMS *Illustrious*

Photograph: Brynn Sharkey

for countries like China and Indonesia, with growing populations, but limited arable land.

Nor is this just a local problem. South-east Asia's rising status as the fastest economic growth area of the 21st century makes the area's peace and security an international concern, and does much to explain the presence of the *Illustrious*.

"We're all one of the largest trading nations in the world," said a senior officer on the ship, "and this is a crucial area of the greatest economic growth. We'll be passing close enough that all the countries interested in the islands will know we're there, and we'll be making a statement passing through."

Diplomatic efforts to solve

the problem have made little progress, but, militarily, much is happening. The navies of south-east Asia have in the past limited themselves to coastal patrol work. All that is quickly changing.

Last week, a couple of Thai admirals visited HMS *Illustrious* for tips on how to use their own new aircraft carrier, an acqui-

sition which the Chinese are also believed to be planning. Singapore now has a submarine.

General Arnulfo Acenera, the Philippines military chief, was asked yesterday whether there was a risk of an armed confrontation over the islands.

"The possibility is there," he said, adding, bluntly: "That's why it's called a flashpoint."

Territorial rights: A Chinese flag flying above huts built by the People's Republic to display sovereignty over Mischief Reef, one of the disputed Spratly Islands
Photograph: AP

INNOVATING COMPUTING FAXING PRINTING COPYING

Totally devoted to you

The LBP-660 is the laser printer you've always dreamed of. The 6 pages per minute, 600 dpi resolution and Automatic Image Refinement (which smoothes edges and sharpens definition) are extremely attractive. And the

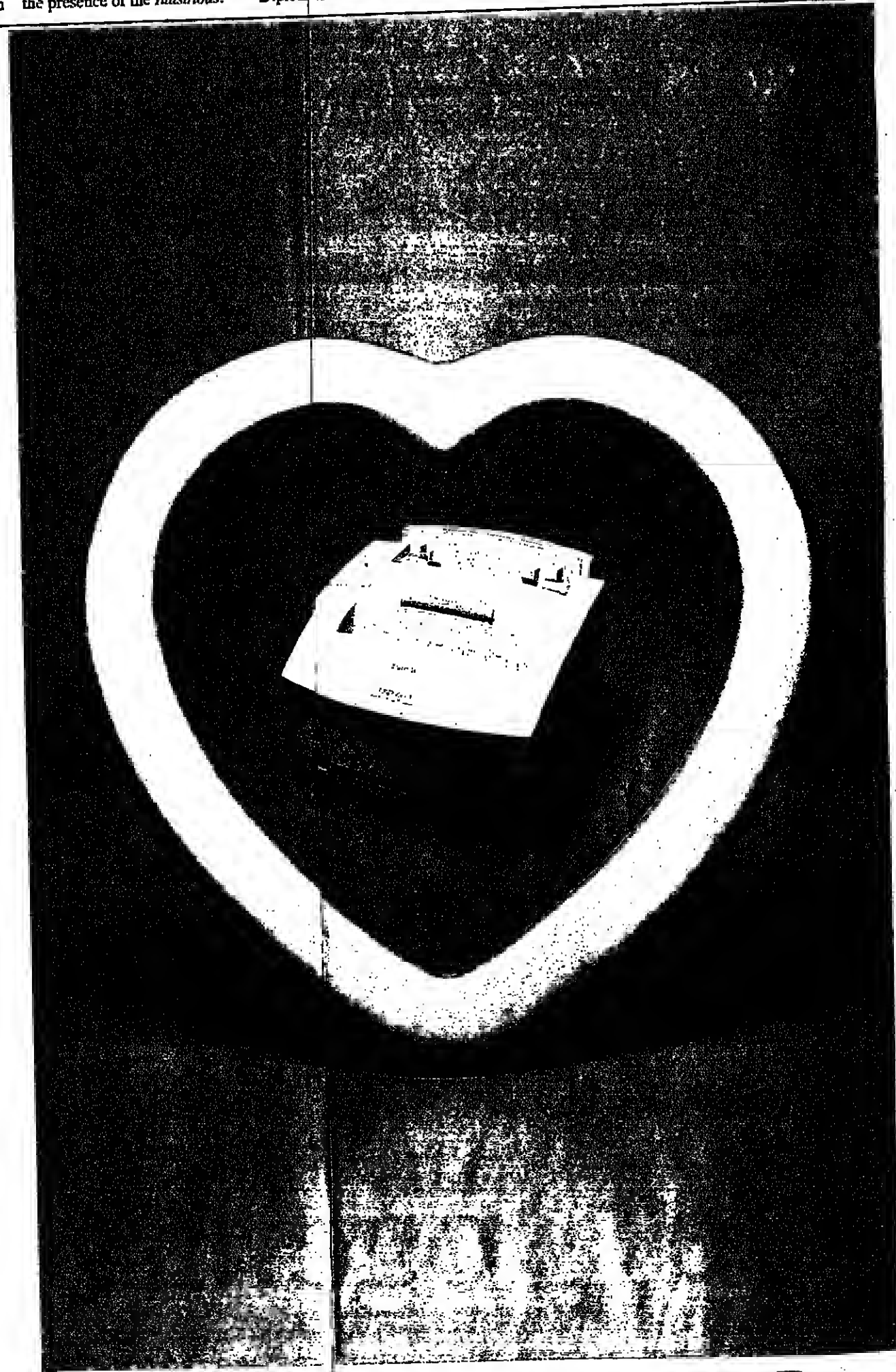
Microsoft® Windows® Printing system makes it very easy to get on with. But it's the compact desktop design that everyone loves. It means home users save both money and space whilst still achieving the same print quality as an office machine. And business users get the same impressive output as they would with a communal printer but more conveniently and personally. At least the

YOU AND CANON CAN.

laser printer you've been longing for is within your reach. For more information call freephone 0500 550 111.

<http://www.europe.canon.com>

Canon



هكذا من الامن

You wouldn't find the UK's most famous flower anywhere but Chelsea

The Ultimate Converter

صباحنا من الامم

international

Kissing has to stop as EU and Blair strike their deals

Since the moment it was elected, Britain's new government has been furiously flirting with Europe. New Labour ministers have been trekking to the Continent, making lavish promises of warm relations as they bugged, patted and kissed.

Now, suddenly, the period of courtship is coming to a close, and the time to sign up to a contract is here. Today Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary (who has hugged more than most) meets his European partners for serious negotiations in The Hague.

On Friday Tony Blair will attend a mini-summit in the Dutch town of Noordwijk. At both meetings discussions will shift gear, as proclamations of good intent give way to detailed examination of treaty texts.

The texts have been produced during the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) on European reform - the negotiations to restructure the European Union's institutions. The results of the IGC will be written into the Treaty of Amsterdam, to be signed next month at the Amsterdam summit.

Even the most enthusiastic watcher of EU politics could be forgiven for losing track of progress in the IGC, which has been grinding on for 18 months.

Britain's new government has itself shown little inclination to examine the details of arcane issues such as vote-weighting, the "third pillar" (including immigration and judicial co-operation) and flexibility, preferring to stick with broad themes.

But the Amsterdam summit is now four weeks away, and the deals struck on the new texts will define Britain's "new relations" with Europe for some time to come.

At the IGC launch in Turin in March 1995, heads of government pledged that the reforms they were wanted were to be far-reaching, in order to reshape the Union so it could work effectively as a union of 27, after enlargement to the east.

Such arguments fuelled fears in Britain of a new march to federalism and the Conservative government set about stalling the negotiations, arguing

Friday's summit marks the end of the honeymoon with New Labour, writes Sarah Helm in Brussels

that the IGC should be viewed more as a 5,000-mile service than a complete overhaul.

Today the new Labour government takes essentially the same view as the Conservatives of what the ambitions of the IGC should be.

When the new ministers talk of a "fresh start", they are not advocating massive new powers for the EU institutions.

Rather, they are advocating a more co-operative approach between Britain and Europe, in the hope that, if the venom can be taken out of the relationship, Britain's modest views of how far integration should go will be seen to strike a chord with other member-states. Labour was

down now look likely to be satisfied. Since Turin, a failure to agree in many areas, combined with a growing awareness that the European public has no appetite for massive new integration, has forced many leaders to trim their more lofty ambitions. Britain will now find it has allies when it resists on certain key integrationist points.

For example, the new government only wants a limited extension of qualified majority voting (QMV), which would remove national vetoes. Many other member-states are reluctant to extend QMV in many areas and have failed to agree a list for action. Germany objects to ending unanimity over environment policy, while Spain objects to ending it for decisions on culture policy.

The much-discussed concept of "flexibility" was hailed as a new mechanism which would allow the Union to integrate faster by giving some groups of states the right to pool powers at a different pace from others. Labour has been wary of flexibility, and today the other 14 are also at odds over how it should work.

The most ambitious programme of integration centres on justice and immigration policy. Labour, like the Conservatives, has insisted on maintaining its frontier controls and opposes giving EU institutions greater powers over justice and immigration.

Most member-states began the IGC discussions by saying that more pooling powers in these areas was vital if the Union was to respond to the new challenges of international crime and asylum-seeking.

Eighteen months later, however, there is confusion about how far the "third pillar" will be further integrated. Britain looks certain to secure its opt-out on the issue of frontier controls.

The negotiations in the run-up to Amsterdam are certain to be tough.

But it is likely that time Mr Blair will next month sign an Amsterdam Treaty which does more resemble a 5,000-mile service than a giant step towards new integration.

But the Amsterdam summit is now four weeks away, and the deals struck on the new texts will define Britain's "new relations" with Europe for some time to come.

At the IGC launch in Turin in March 1995, heads of government pledged that the reforms they were wanted were to be far-reaching, in order to reshape the Union so it could work effectively as a union of 27, after enlargement to the east.

Such arguments fuelled fears in Britain of a new march to federalism and the Conservative government set about stalling the negotiations, arguing

that the IGC should be viewed more as a 5,000-mile service than a complete overhaul.

Today the new Labour government takes essentially the same view as the Conservatives of what the ambitions of the IGC should be.

When the new ministers talk of a "fresh start", they are not advocating massive new powers for the EU institutions.

Rather, they are advocating a more co-operative approach between Britain and Europe, in the hope that, if the venom can be taken out of the relationship, Britain's modest views of how far integration should go will be seen to strike a chord with other member-states. Labour was

down now look likely to be satisfied. Since Turin, a failure to agree in many areas, combined with a growing awareness that the European public has no appetite for massive new integration, has forced many leaders to trim their more lofty ambitions. Britain will now find it has allies when it resists on certain key integrationist points.

For example, the new government only wants a limited extension of qualified majority voting (QMV), which would remove national vetoes. Many other member-states are reluctant to extend QMV in many areas and have failed to agree a list for action. Germany objects to ending unanimity over environment policy, while Spain objects to ending it for decisions on culture policy.

The much-discussed concept of "flexibility" was hailed as a new mechanism which would allow the Union to integrate faster by giving some groups of states the right to pool powers at a different pace from others. Labour has been wary of flexibility, and today the other 14 are also at odds over how it should work.

The most ambitious programme of integration centres on justice and immigration policy. Labour, like the Conservatives, has insisted on maintaining its frontier controls and opposes giving EU institutions greater powers over justice and immigration.

Most member-states began the IGC discussions by saying that more pooling powers in these areas was vital if the Union was to respond to the new challenges of international crime and asylum-seeking.

Eighteen months later, however, there is confusion about how far the "third pillar" will be further integrated. Britain looks certain to secure its opt-out on the issue of frontier controls.

The negotiations in the run-up to Amsterdam are certain to be tough.

But it is likely that time Mr Blair will next month sign an Amsterdam Treaty which does more resemble a 5,000-mile service than a giant step towards new integration.



Rising star: The flag of the Republic of Congo, as Zaire is now officially known, in the London embassy window

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

Nerves fray as Kabila gets down to business at last

Mary Braid
Kinshasa

There were more than a few nervous suits yesterday when Congo-Zaire's new political order started its first full day in Kinshasa by "inviting" the business community to a meeting, at just a few hours' notice.

It was impossible to get rich in the old Zaire without participating in the corrupt, bribe-ridden system. The advisers to Zaire's new leader, Laurence Kabila, know that. So did the hundreds of businessmen who dutifully stood in line yesterday to be searched for weapons before meeting their new political masters.

The fattest cats and the biggest thieves went with Mr Mobutu, who fled Kinshasa on Friday, just one day before the capital fell to Mr Kabila's rebel forces. But Jean-Pierre Bemba, owner of a cellular telephone company, argues that the country's entire entrepreneurial class was tied up with corruption.

The businessmen who remain are afraid of being victimised. Mr Bemba, who supports the new government's



Fallen idol: A child defacing a painting of Mobutu Sese Seko in the deposed leader's looted house

Photograph: AP

attempts to recover billions of dollars stolen from Zaire by the former president and his cronies, suggests that Mr Kabila let bygones be bygones.

"He should not come with the idea of revenge," said Mr Bemba. "He has to accept working with anybody, even if they worked with the old order. In Zaire you could not get anything done or any paper approved unless you gave money to the administration." If they were to arrest everyone in-

volvement in corruption, he pointed out, the jails would be full.

In Mr Bemba's case, there is a particularly strong association with the exiled Mr Mobutu. His sister is married to one of the former president's sons. But Mr Bemba has still chosen to stay.

For the moment, the greatest concern of the business community is the possibility of full-scale nationalisation. At a press conference yesterday Deo Bugera, the general secretary to Mr Kabila's Alliance, was short

on detail about plans for the resuscitation of the country's economy.

But Mr Kabila, a former Marxist whose professed conversion to the free market took place only recently, has already nationalised the Siza rail network run by the South Africans and Belgians. Other business leaders now fear a similar fate, saying socialist or Communist solutions would be a disaster for Congo-Zaire, a country the size of Western Europe.

A recent document, which purported to come from Mr Kabila's Alliance, outlined plans that would force foreign investors to take Congolese partners, require 15 per cent deposit up front for proposed investment, and a new social obligation for business to fund schools and hospitals. It seems self-evident that Mr Kabila will have to work, whatever the distrust, with existing businesses for the good of Congo-Zaire.

The city's existing political parties fear they will be frozen from power by the new order, despite promises of a democratic election. Mr Kabila has an army but little political organisation. He is under pressure at

home and abroad to bring political opposition groups into his promised Government for National Salvation. The problem is that Mr Kabila feels that the city's political classes, like the business community, had sold out to Mr Mobutu.

Whether Mr Kabila, a lifelong revolutionary who was overthrown by the Mobutu regime, will turn out to be a pragmatist or purist, is still unclear. Most observers believe that only a pragmatist has a chance of breathing life into a country rich in minerals and natural resources but devoid of infrastructure - bankrupt and reduced to ruins by the felon who ruled for 32 years.

But the Amsterdam summit is now four weeks away, and the deals struck on the new texts will define Britain's "new relations" with Europe for some time to come.

At the IGC launch in Turin in March 1995, heads of government pledged that the reforms they were wanted were to be far-reaching, in order to reshape the Union so it could work effectively as a union of 27, after enlargement to the east.

Such arguments fuelled fears in Britain of a new march to federalism and the Conservative government set about stalling the negotiations, arguing

that the IGC should be viewed more as a 5,000-mile service than a complete overhaul.

Today the new Labour government takes essentially the same view as the Conservatives of what the ambitions of the IGC should be.

When the new ministers talk of a "fresh start", they are not advocating massive new powers for the EU institutions.

Rather, they are advocating a more co-operative approach between Britain and Europe, in the hope that, if the venom can be taken out of the relationship, Britain's modest views of how far integration should go will be seen to strike a chord with other member-states. Labour was

down now look likely to be satisfied. Since Turin, a failure to agree in many areas, combined with a growing awareness that the European public has no appetite for massive new integration, has forced many leaders to trim their more lofty ambitions. Britain will now find it has allies when it resists on certain key integrationist points.

For example, the new government only wants a limited extension of qualified majority voting (QMV), which would remove national vetoes. Many other member-states are reluctant to extend QMV in many areas and have failed to agree a list for action. Germany objects to ending unanimity over environment policy, while Spain objects to ending it for decisions on culture policy.

The much-discussed concept of "flexibility" was hailed as a new mechanism which would allow the Union to integrate faster by giving some groups of states the right to pool powers at a different pace from others. Labour has been wary of flexibility, and today the other 14 are also at odds over how it should work.

The most ambitious programme of integration centres on justice and immigration policy. Labour, like the Conservatives, has insisted on maintaining its frontier controls and opposes giving EU institutions greater powers over justice and immigration.

Most member-states began the IGC discussions by saying that more pooling powers in these areas was vital if the Union was to respond to the new challenges of international crime and asylum-seeking.

Eighteen months later, however, there is confusion about how far the "third pillar" will be further integrated. Britain looks certain to secure its opt-out on the issue of frontier controls.

The negotiations in the run-up to Amsterdam are certain to be tough.

But it is likely that time Mr Blair will next month sign an Amsterdam Treaty which does more resemble a 5,000-mile service than a giant step towards new integration.

But the Amsterdam summit is now four weeks away, and the deals struck on the new texts will define Britain's "new relations" with Europe for some time to come.

At the IGC launch in Turin in March 1995, heads of government pledged that the reforms they were wanted were to be far-reaching, in order to reshape the Union so it could work effectively as a union of 27, after enlargement to the east.

Such arguments fuelled fears in Britain of a new march to federalism and the Conservative government set about stalling the negotiations, arguing

that the IGC should be viewed more as a 5,000-mile service than a complete overhaul.

Today the new Labour government takes essentially the same view as the Conservatives of what the ambitions of the IGC should be.

When the new ministers talk of a "fresh start", they are not advocating massive new powers for the EU institutions.

Rather, they are advocating a more co-operative approach between Britain and Europe, in the hope that, if the venom can be taken out of the relationship, Britain's modest views of how far integration should go will be seen to strike a chord with other member-states. Labour was

down now look likely to be satisfied. Since Turin, a failure to agree in many areas, combined with a growing awareness that the European public has no appetite for massive new integration, has forced many leaders to trim their more lofty ambitions. Britain will now find it has allies when it resists on certain key integrationist points.

For example, the new government only wants a limited extension of qualified majority voting (QMV), which would remove national vetoes. Many other member-states are reluctant to extend QMV in many areas and have failed to agree a list for action. Germany objects to ending unanimity over environment policy, while Spain objects to ending it for decisions on culture policy.

The much-discussed concept of "flexibility" was hailed as a new mechanism which would allow the Union to integrate faster by giving some groups of states the right to pool powers at a different pace from others. Labour has been wary of flexibility, and today the other 14 are also at odds over how it should work.

The most ambitious programme of integration centres on justice and immigration policy. Labour, like the Conservatives, has insisted on maintaining its frontier controls and opposes giving EU institutions greater powers over justice and immigration.

Most member-states began the IGC discussions by saying that more pooling powers in these areas was vital if the Union was to respond to the new challenges of international crime and asylum-seeking.

Eighteen months later, however, there is confusion about how far the "third pillar" will be further integrated. Britain looks certain to secure its opt-out on the issue of frontier controls.

The negotiations in the run-up to Amsterdam are certain to be tough.

But it is likely that time Mr Blair will next month sign an Amsterdam Treaty which does more resemble a 5,000-mile service than a giant step towards new integration.

Cook flies to US to rebuild 'special' bond

Mary Dejevsky
Washington

Britain's new Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, paid a flying visit to Washington yesterday, designed to re-cement the "special relationship" after a tetchy five years and convince the US administration that New Labour is a reliable partner in Nato.

Mr Cook's visit, arranged at short notice to precede President Clinton's stopover in London in 10 days' time, included meetings with a top line-up of officials. As protocol required, he met his US opposite number, Madeleine Albright. But he also met the defence secretary, William Cohen, and Mr Clinton's National Security Adviser, Sandy Berger.

The meetings reflected what one commentator described as the "enthusiastic interest" of the US administration in the new Government's aim of enhancing its standing in Europe.

Of the themes broached during the visit, the durability of the Nato alliance was uppermost, with Europe a close second. The only specific agreement to emerge from the meetings was a declaration on co-ordinating preparations for a conference to determine the fate of gold looted by Nazi Germany and still held in Western banks.

Ireland, which Mr Clinton has put at the top of his agenda for the new British Government, was discussed yesterday, as was Britain's hope that the United States might use whatever influence it has with China to keep a weather eye out for

Hong Kong, after the handover.

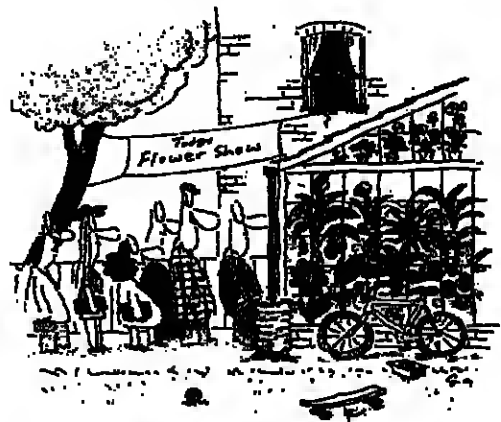
On Ireland, Mr Cook took pains to correct any idea that Sinn Fein would be included in peace talks, regardless of whether it agreed to a ceasefire. Mr Blair's decision to reopen contacts, Mr Cook said, was designed to ensure that Sinn Fein "understood" the Government's position: Sinn Fein could participate in peace talks only if it agreed to "a credible ceasefire".

On Hong Kong, Mr Cook echoed remarks by Governor Chris Patten, saying that "whatever pressure the US might want to exert on China, for whatever reason", Britain was keen that it should not withdraw most favoured nation (MFN) status from China. This, he said, would only jeopardise the Hong Kong economy.

Concern about the fulfilment of the Dayton accords for peace in the former Yugoslavia was also expressed during the talks. Mr Cook emphasised that progress had not been as great as had been hoped, but he also said there was no change to Britain's "one out, all out" policy for eventual withdrawal from Bosnia.

In a commentary published in the *Washington Post* on the eve of his visit, Mr Cook affirmed Britain's commitment to Nato, and he repeated that yesterday, describing the US as "one of our strongest and oldest allies".

On Europe, he said that Britain as "a leading player in Europe" would be "a more useful partner" to the US than one that was "drifting into being a marginalised offshore island".



You wouldn't hold the UK's most famous flower show anywhere but Chelsea.

If you want to see the finest blooms, nowhere can equal the Chelsea Flower Show. For the blossoming of the brightest business ideas, nowhere is quite like the International Convention Centre, Birmingham.

The modern facilities, impressive quality of service, value for money and superb ease of access are attracting more leading business people to the ICC, all the time.

For conventions, meetings or conferences, make sure you get the pick of the crop. Call 0121 200 2000 today.

The Ultimate Convention Centre
International Convention Centre
Broad Street Birmingham B1 2EA
www.necgroup.co.uk

We heard you wanted...

18 months free banking

Realising that a "constant stream of bank charges" is far from welcome, Midland gives its new business customers 18 months free banking. There are no transaction charges for cheques you write or for the payments you make into your account and no charges for any direct debits or standing orders - even if you're overdrawn.

Your success is as important to Midland as it is to you, so you'll have a dedicated business banker to guide and support you whenever you need it.

Midland
The Listening Bank

Call 0345 40 41 42

Call for details



or visit a branch



or visit our website



www.midlandbank.com

BUB 01

Hong Kong handover

Chinese rule threatens the legal system

Stephen Vines
Hong Kong

The opening of Hong Kong's legal year with the parade of judges in their long wigs, the barristers in their shorter wigs and the swish of robes, is almost certain to become a thing of the past. Abandoning this kind of anachronism may well be no bad thing, but there is a widespread uncertainty about whether the symbolic changes will be overshadowed by substantive changes to the legal system.

Elise Leung, who will be the Secretary for Justice in the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong government, insists that the basic tenets of an independent judiciary and the rule of law will be preserved, albeit with changes having to be made. "Just give us a chance to prove it works," she requests.

The trouble is that many legal practitioners already have serious misgivings. Margaret Ng, a legislator representing the legal profession, has emerged as one of the most articulate doubters. "I think the system is very vulnerable," she says.

China is finding it difficult to persuade critics that the system will retain its integrity, and the list of pressure points is growing. First, problems are mounting over the translation and origination of laws in Chinese, as opposed to English, a process started by the current administration.

Miss Ng has no quarrel with the notion that a community which is overwhelmingly Chinese should be served by laws in the language of the people, but believes that the rush to introduce the Chinese language is roaring away without acknowledging the problems. Moreover, it is undermining the

common law system which is supposed to be maintained under the new order. "It would be wonderful to teach the common law to speak Chinese," she says. But concepts of the common law do not readily accommodate themselves to expression in Chinese.

Miss Leung freely admits the use of Chinese is highly problematic. As a lawyer, even she had to refer to English texts to make sure of meanings and interpretations which were not clear in her mother tongue. "We don't want to sacrifice the quality of justice to achieve bi-lingualism," she says.

Under the new system, China's National People's Con-

"We don't want to sacrifice the quality of justice to achieve bi-lingualism"

gress (NPC) has the power of interpreting the Basic Law, Hong Kong's new mini-constitution. Miss Leung says bluntly that "this is a very difficult concept in the common law, because under the common law only the courts have the power of interpretation". In China, interpretation is the responsibility of political bodies.

She believes that the guarantee of a high degree of autonomy in Hong Kong ensures that Chinese bodies will play no more than a minimal role in the territory's legal system, but says "I'm not saying it's going to be an easy thing" to

reconcile the two systems. Part of the problem is that it remains unclear which aspects of interpretation will reside with the NPC. It is assumed that China will intervene only on issues relating to national security. This may well include political challenges to the government.

There's a very dangerous suggestion around town these days," says Miss Ng, "that as far as commercial disputes are concerned the old system will remain, and only in political and criminal matters you will have less protection. The two are deeply connected. Once privilege creeps in, the rule of law is at an end."

In a speech to businessmen last October Chris Patten, the Governor of Hong Kong, said "the rule of law is not an optional extra. It is what makes Hong Kong different, it is what makes Hong Kong successful".

Already, politics appears to be creeping in. Some eyebrows were raised by the appointment of Miss Leung, a stalwart supporter of the Peking government and member of the National People's Congress.

"I can see how the public reacts to it," she says. Further suspicions were aired when Tung Chee Hwa, the new Chief Executive, decided to drop two members of the commission which appoints judges. One was Sir Joseph Hwang, a benefactor of pro-democracy causes; the other was Eleanor Ling, an executive of the Jardines group, the British-controlled company most disliked by China.

The new commission's first job will be to appoint the Chief Justice. Many say that if the high court judge Benjamin Loh is appointed, the politicisation of the judiciary will be there for all to see. Justice Liu is a member of

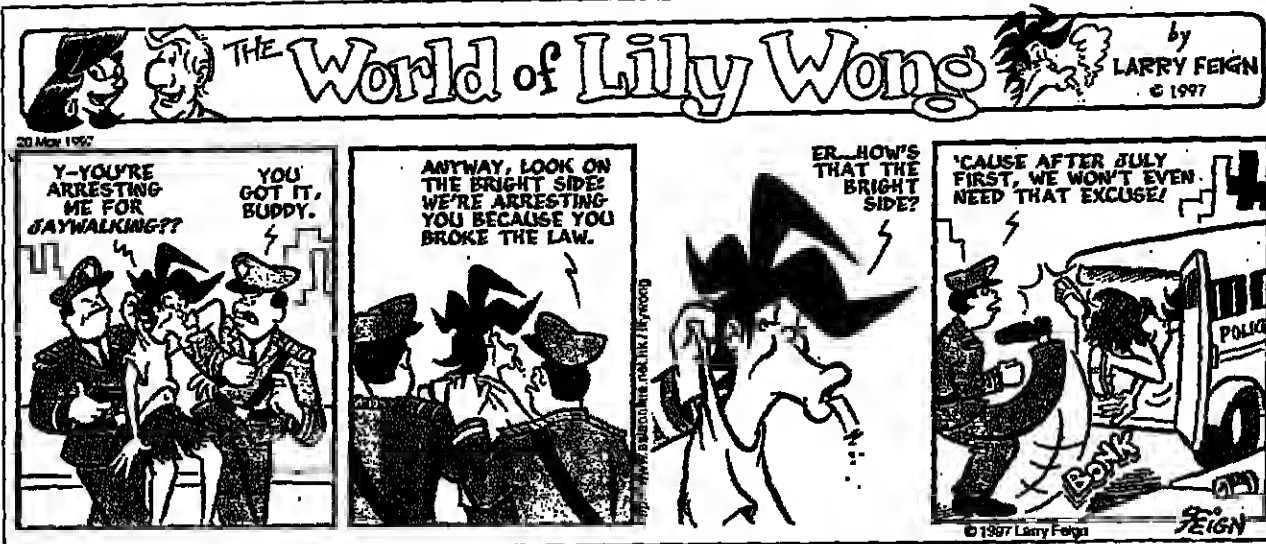


In the balance: A fish merchant weighs his goods. While the political future is uncertain, continued prosperity seems assured Photograph: Tom Pilsten

one of Hong Kong's most stalwart pro-China families.

"If judges are chosen for political correctness", warns Miss Ng, "we will get a bunch of judges valued not for their legal qualifications but for political considerations." Although the current legal system is described by some as a paragon virtue, it is not free of critics. Both the judiciary and the government's scandal-prone legal department have been embroiled in controversy.

Last week the new legal system was given an unexpected boost when the United States Supreme Court turned down an appeal by a Hong Kong fugitive who had hitherto been that the new order could not guarantee a fair trial.



Imagine.

Lufthansa

As a business traveller, wouldn't it be great if the airline you fly most often were linked to other major airlines that could fly you anywhere you wanted to go. Smoothly. Effortlessly. Efficiently. Wouldn't it be great if you had access to more airport lounges. And when flying on any of these major airlines, you could

earn mileage points that count towards higher status in any of their frequent flyer programmes. Wouldn't it be great if you could enjoy the same high standards of service whenever and wherever you fly. That's the idea behind Star Alliance™, a network of SAS, Air Canada, Lufthansa, THAI, and United Airlines. A fundamental

مكتبة من الامم المتحدة

Hong Kong handover

Celebrations scale the peak of patriotism

No one can accuse the Chinese of lack of ingenuity in their celebrations in the run-up to the return of Hong Kong. In Peking's Xicheng district, for instance, some 15,000 locals recently turned up for the "Welcome the Return of Hong Kong - All Citizens' Exercise Day". Mass callisthenics, skipping and tug-of-war were the focus of the patriotic activities.

A group of Chinese university students have set their sights higher. On 18 June they will start climbing the north face of the 6,179-metre Jade Pearl mountain in Qinghai province. Hong Kong student mountaineers will scale the south side. And the two teams will meet on the top on the morning of 1 July, the day Hong Kong reverts to Chinese sovereignty.

Students at the Jiajia University for the Disabled in Shandong province have spent the past 10 months obtaining the signatures of all disabled mainland Chinese, including those abroad, and these have been bound into an album called "Anthology of Aspiration at the return of Hong Kong". There were some 190,000 signatures in to-

Climbing a mountain is just one way to show how much you care, writes **Teresa Poole** in Peking

tal, and this week the album was handed over to government officials to be sent to Hong Kong.

Thus is the mainland gripped by heady anticipation. And the country expects every citizen to show his or her patriotic fervour in some manner. This month, to mark the "50 days to go" point, 1,100 youth league members released 500 doves into the Peking sky.

Rather more self-restrained, nearly 100 of Peking's literary figures gathered together to recite poems, sing, and paint "to express their happiness at the upcoming return of Hong Kong to the embrace of the motherland". The Communist Party secretary of the China Writers' Association hailed a China that will "sweep away 100 years' humiliation".

The party is pushing patriotism for all its worth, in the hope that some of the population's very real pleasure over the return of Hong

Kong may start to rub off on the Chinese government. President Jiang Zemin entitled his most recent major speech, "On Strengthening Education in Patriotism". "Furious hatred of foreign invaders, boundless disdain for the nation's scoundrels who sought power and wealth by betraying the country, and great reverence for noble-minded patriots have become our precious national character," he declared.

Sometimes it takes a bit of healthy competition to educate the masses, and the handover has prompted a flurry of quizzes. Telephone the number 2666-1997 in Peking and you will get through to the Peking Evening News "Knowledge competition" which will test your understanding of Hong Kong affairs. The winners of the twice-weekly quiz will be rewarded with a set of Hong Kong stamps, and if you are correct in all 20 sets of questions, you stand a chance of a free

visit to Hong Kong. A sample question: In what year did Hong Kong forbid what the newspaper called "coolie ships" from entering harbour? 1817 or 1873? (Answer: 1873.)

But it is in the official media that Hong Kong-related propaganda has reached saturation levels. Peking Cable Channel 1 is running 50 episodes on the Basic Law, China's mini-constitution, under which it will rule Hong Kong. China Central Television's main national channel is screening a six-episode series, *Hong Kong's Vicissitudes*, with titles including *History's Choice*, *Way of Return*, and *Popular Confidence*.

The Peking Youth Daily is running a four-part full-page spread on the history of Hong Kong, followed by a test paper for readers to check they have assimilated the information. An editorial this week ordered: "For every Chinese, we should all look back on modern history which was full of unbearable humiliation. Looking back is the best way for us to gain strength and confidence today. Modern Chinese history tells the truth: whoever is backward will be beaten."

From kukri to kitchen sink

Former Gurkha soldiers in Hong Kong have been forced to swap their deadly kukri knives for kitchen knives as they resort to domestic jobs to supplement the meagre pensions received for service in the British Army.

The Nepalese Alien Association in Hong Kong estimates that more than 200 former soldiers are now working in the colony as domestic servants; either as cooks, gardeners or drivers.

Whereas retired British servicemen receive at least £450 per month in pension payments, the former Gurkha soldiers are given just over £20.

The Army insists that this is sufficient for a reasonable existence in Nepal, combined with the lump sum

The Gurkhas' toughest mission is now economic survival. **Stephen Vines** reports

retirement pay of £4,000, and likely savings the soldiers would have made during their service.

However, Gurkhas who have returned from Hong Kong to Nepal have had difficulty making ends meet and have sought jobs back in the colony. Most have more or less landed on their feet by signing up as security guards. This is viewed as a reasonably-paid job.

Jardine Securicor, the main employer of former Gurkhas, is cutting back its Nepali staff from 720 to 600 men because many of the big projects they were guarding no longer require their services.

Some have found employment as bodyguards to local tycoons. One very prominent businessman, whose son was kidnapped for ransom, is said to have 20 former Gurkha soldiers on his payroll.

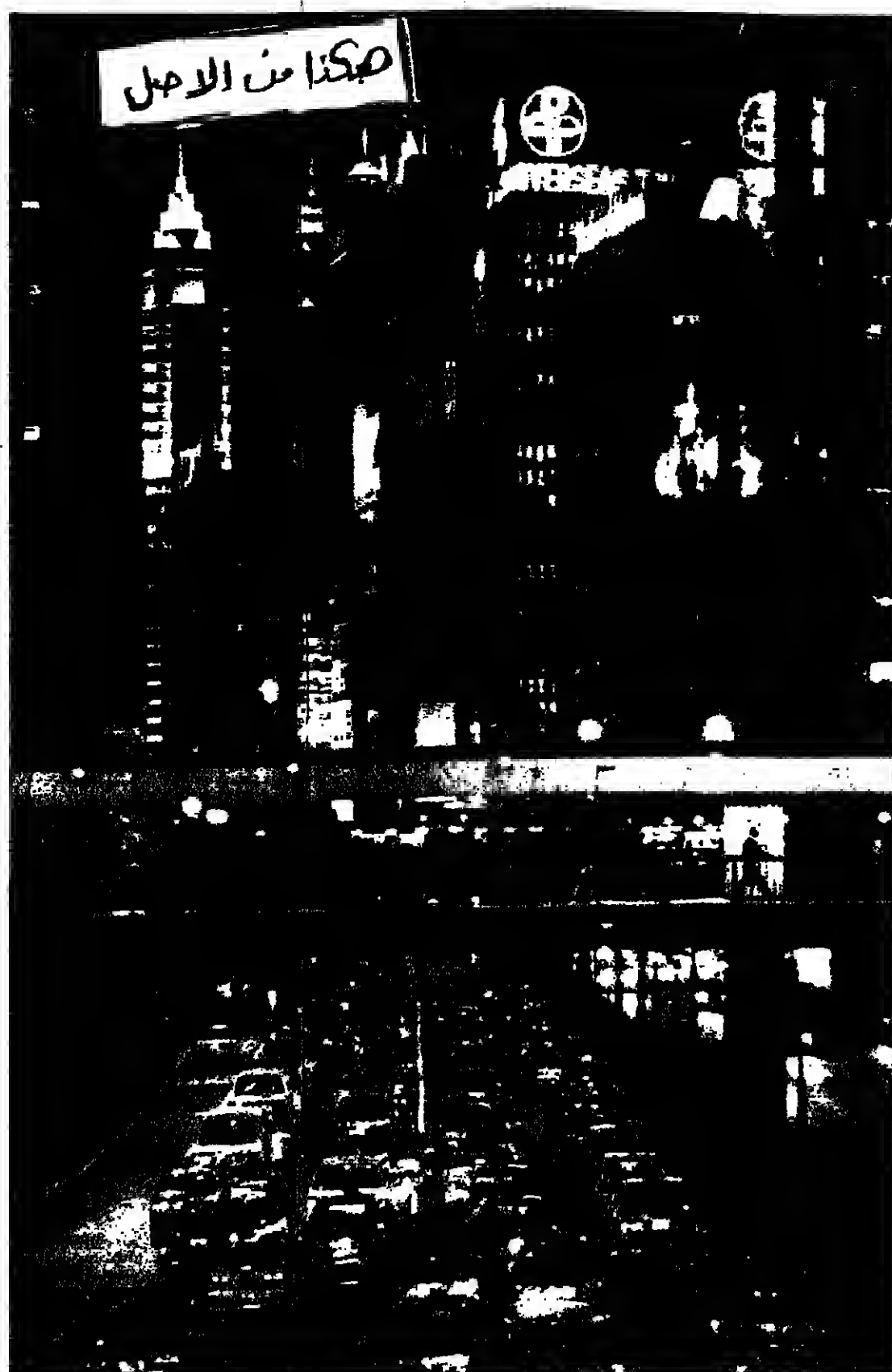
The Gurkhas in Hong Kong used to form the backbone of border patrols deployed to keep out illegal immigrants from China. The job was arduous and anti-social, as most patrols were out and about in the hours of darkness. Never the less, Hong Kong was a popular posting for the Nepali soldiers.

Having observed the wealth of Hong Kong from their barracks, as

many as 4,000 have returned to try and secure a small slice of it for themselves. They trade on a good reputation for honesty and hard work, but this has proved insufficient to supply adequate employment.

Gurkha groups have long campaigned for equal pay with their British counterparts. Last February, the few remaining Nepali soldiers in the British forces scored a major victory by breaking historical precedent and gaining parity in remuneration. However, pension arrangements remained unchanged.

Discrimination also still applies to Gurkha soldiers living with their families. Three-quarters of those below the rank of sergeant have to live apart from their families.



Bright lights, big city: Traffic queues in Hong Kong's thriving Central District

Photograph: Tom Pilston

...in business travel. And these benefits are just beginning. We will be offering even more in the years ahead. We know you have a lot of choices when it comes to flying, and we're making sure Star Alliance is always the best choice. After all, there's no better way in the world to get around the world.

STAR ALLIANCE
The airline network for Earth.

Blair's Roundheads are too cavalier with the bans

The new government is exhibiting distinct Roundhead tendencies. If Tony ("call me Oliver") Blair has long had Cromwellian leanings in the way he runs the Labour Party, it is only recently that Home Secretary Jack Straw has been trying on Colonel Fairfax's uniform.

During the past few days Labour's New Model Army has been proposing to kill various joys and severely restrict others. After alcohol, the weed: the Government's instinct is to reach for legislative prohibition. Yesterday the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, said that as well as banning tobacco advertising, the Government intends to proscribe sponsorship by cigarette companies.

The alcohol and tobacco industries are not backward in coming forward and they will shout long and exaggeratedly. But they must not try to play the "socialist" card. Labour's leaders are nothing if not adepts of Thatcherism. One of the ingredients of that strong brew, and the weaker potion stirred by John Major, was a willingness to throw the statute book at "problems". Thatcherism was authoritarian. It waltzed extended police powers and added chapters to the criminal code. The Tories were all for banning dogs, raves, travellers, football fans, homosexuals. From the Dangerous Dogs Act to Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1987 we have examples of government by fiat; however badly drafted and ultimately unworkable the statutes, the intention was to throw the weight of the state into stopping behaviour.

Labour may repeal some of these Tory statutes, and will burnish its liberal credentials if it does. But its instincts already appear worryingly similar: instead of persuasion, legislative nannying; instead of fiscal incentives, blanket bans. Take alcohol. It is the case that alcohol is a noxious drug. It is a factor in household accidents and abuse, in death and mayhem on the roads, violence among the young, and disease and deterioration among the old. It is also an essential lubricant of our kind of society and - this is the clincher - the point at which individuals must be allowed to choose to go to heaven or hell in their own way, and choose, too, whether to bring up their children well or badly. Children who are badly supervised, who live outside the bonds of family trust, will find ways to drink, smoke and otherwise misbehave. That the drinks industry has a product engineered to look and taste like carbonated sweet drinks does nothing, in itself, to predispose teenagers to defy their parents or abandon their own sense of right. We have reason to worry about standards of parenting and the quality of supervision of young people but that ought not to justify proscribing a commercial product which is otherwise entirely legal.

Similar arguments apply to tobacco. There is something dishonest about making conduct associated with cigarettes (such as advertising or sponsoring racing cars) illegal but refusing to contemplate proscribing the action itself. Smoking affects other people in enclosed spaces; no one should be forced to smoke passively. These precepts justify banning smoking in planes and (sections of) restaurants. But preventing Embassy sponsoring snooker or Benson and Hedges sponsoring golf feels like an intrusion on everyone. The tobacco companies may have quite cynically bought their way into public affection by their heavy investment in sports, but there it is: cigarette money con-



ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E14 5DL
TELEPHONE 0171-293 2000 / 0171-345 2000 FAX 0171-293 2435 / 0171-345 2435

tributes mightily to the diversity of sport, to widening fields of attainment and so to the greater pleasure of the participating and watching public. That fact has also to be weighed in the balance.

To argue this way is of course not to condone an activity with such harmful individual effects and substantial social costs. But what the state should be doing is sharpening the individual calculus: for example, wondering whether the time has now come for the NHS to charge smokers, downgrading its work on lung cancer (insofar as it is self-induced), and visiting on individuals and their relatives the consequences of their behaviour.

Government operates inside a balance of liberties and proscriptions. Tony Blair is in tune with public opinion and right in principle to move swiftly to ban entirely the private ownership of hand guns. On good Millite principles, weapons should be strictly controlled: their purpose is to inflict harm, potentially on other people, and any sporting activity is not only still possible, but anyway incidental. What New Labour needs to do is work case by case. Blairites should be careful of reaching for the parliamentary draftsman every time.

These next few months are going to offer plenty of other occasions when the case for state intervention will need the most thorough examination and debate. Take the export of live calves. Again, a range of considerations applies, from the commercial advantage of British farmers to the enjoyment of Italian consumers. In a civilised country - a consideration independent of debate about how far animals are sentient - animals ought to be treated in a civilised way. A key question becomes whether it is possible to transport live calves by truck humanely and still make the trade viable. It is for government to specify standards and for the state to insist that animals are well treated. But, respecting the diversity of public views, government must strive to avoid blanket bans.

Before long another vexed animal issue will show New Labour in its true colours: the future of fox hunting.

Labour MPs should reflect. Demonstrating vociferously against hunting, persuading landowners to refuse permission for their land to be hunted over, and excreting the cult of ritual slaughter are legitimate tactics for opponents to use. But they stop well short of using the power of the state to ban the activity. That would be oppressive. New Labour Cromwellians should remember with what enthusiasm the Cavalier king was welcomed back. Puritanism is only ever one swing of a long pendulum.

We thank you, Ms Widdicombe

There should be no mistaking the significance of Ann Widdicombe's onslaught on Michael Howard yesterday. Forget the fact that her own hands are hardly clean: as she admitted, she should have resigned months ago. Forget the personal animus. This was not eventually about Michael Howard or Derek Lewis. What the former prisons minister illustrated was constitutional failure: the incapacity of the House of Commons to hold the executive properly to account. MPs are regularly hoodwinked and fobbed off. Ms Widdicombe deserves the thanks of everyone concerned to reform the way the country is run.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

British refuge saves lives of Algerians

Sir: Last week the reports that an asylum-seeker had died in custody on his enforced return to Algeria highlighted the civil war there. The deportation of the many Algerians currently detained in prisons and detention centres here was suspended. How tragic if the good news (report, 19 May), that that particular asylum seeker is alive and unharmed, should become bad news for those Algerians hoping for temporary admission, were it to be used as an excuse by the Home Office to speed up their deportation.

The risk to any young man sent back to Algeria is enormous. Those avoiding military service because they don't want to kill their compatriots have "disappeared" in police custody. Those who have completed their studies suffer reprisals from Muslim terrorists. No one knows what has happened to many of those who have already been forcibly repatriated.

I have come to know a number of Algerians over the past two years through visiting them in detention. They have strong family ties and miss their culture and way of life. All they want is the chance to stay here until it is reasonably safe to return. They are willing to work at the most menial jobs in order to support themselves and their friends. They do not want to depend on state benefits.

Detainees from Zaïre have now mostly been released from detention. No doubt many will soon choose to return to make a fresh start in their country. I hope the new Home Secretary will see his way to ending months of agonising uncertainty by giving the same rights to the Algerians. **THERESA FRAYN Oxford**

Sir: Robert Fisk ("Truth the victim in American crackdown", 16 May) writes of the questionable means used by the US authorities in their attempt to snuff a terror Haddam back to Algeria. Truth is even more a victim in Algeria itself.

No information regarding "security" matters in Algeria may be reported that has not been issued by the security forces or the official press agency. The French newspaper *Liberation* (23 April) reported that journalists trying to visit the village where 93 people were reportedly massacred on the night of 21/22 April were turned back, preventing any independent confirmation of the massacre. There are no foreign journalists in Algeria, and on the rare occasions that they obtain visas they must almost invariably be accompanied by a security forces escort. Thus no independent reports are reaching us from Algeria.

On 23 February Rachid Medjahed, arrested by the security forces, appeared on television and "confessed" to having planned and directed the killing of the prominent trade unionist Abdelhak Benhamouda on 28 January 1997. Rachid Medjahed's father, who had not known of his son's arrest until he saw him on television, was shown his son's body in a hospital on 3 April. He was not allowed to take the body but was given a death certificate signed 3 March.

On 8 April representatives of Human Rights Watch, who were visiting Algeria, were told by the Minister of Justice that Rachid Medjahed had been wounded but so far as the minister knew was well and receiving treatment.



Do the Algerian authorities know what is going on in their own country? Amnesty International is gravely concerned that Mr Medjahed was extrajudicially killed. The truth about the deaths of tens of thousands of other Algerians needs to be most urgently known. The dreadful atrocities carried out by armed groups cannot be an excuse for not permitting the truth of the situation in Algeria to reach the outside world. **ROGER GOLDSMITH Country Coordinator Algeria, Amnesty International UK Colwyn Bay, Chwyd**

Babies at risk from dioxins

Sir: It has been known for many years that PCBs and dioxins are widespread in our diet and are concentrated in human milk as well as in cows' milk (Briefing, 15 May) and that they take a long time to decay, probably over 10 years. They are entirely man-made and the biggest source in past years has been the incineration of municipal waste. In a report published last year the Inspectorate of Pollution (now part of the Environment Agency) stated that far breast-fed babies the estimated average intake of dioxins is approximately 9-28 picogrammes (pg) per kilogram body weight, per day, compared to the adult intake of 1-5pg.

These estimates were based on measurements by the Ministry of Agriculture and were used to demonstrate that the encouragement of incineration as a method of dealing with the UK's waste disposal problem would not

cause any health hazards from dioxin emissions from the incinerator, as modern equipment could trap the dioxins and guarantee that less than 1,000pg of dioxins per cubic metre of air were discharged to air: this would mean that those living near the incinerator would only absorb a maximum of 0.1-0.5pg per Kg body weight a day, a small amount compared with what they were absorbing from their diet.

The report however admits that even on their estimated figures breast-fed babies would be receiving more than the recommended daily dose.

Now we learn that actual measurements are far greater and show that breast-fed babies at two months old are absorbing as much as 110pg per Kg in body weight plus another 60 pg of PCBs, of similar toxicity, which were not measured before. But, we are told, all will be well because once the baby goes on to mixed food and takes less milk the dioxins they have absorbed will gradually decay.

These compounds are accepted carcinogens: the Americans and many British scientists believe they are capable of affecting the hormones and the immune system. It is urgent that steps be taken to reduce the amounts in our diet as soon as possible. The previous government's policy of encouraging incineration of municipal waste should be reversed. There are other ways of dealing with waste. **Dr PATRICIA ELLIOTT Saffron Walden, Essex**

Devolution leaves England behind

Sir: The Government's devolution proposals will give more rights and control over their lives to citizens who happen to live in Scotland than those in Wales, and those in Wales will have more than those in England. Citizens of Northern Ireland will be fourth-class citizens. Proposals for London will give Londoners preferential treatment compared with residents of our other great cities. The two areas of the UK which receive a disproportionately large share of national resources, Scotland and London, will have governments which will assist them in gaining an even greater advantage.

Tony Blair has reiterated New Labour's intention "to speak for and serve the whole nation". If he is serious in this claim, he must assure us that within the foreseeable future Wales and English regions will get the same powers as Scotland, and, critically, ensure that legislation for an elected mayor and authority for London encompasses also Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Newcastle. **DAVID SEE Manchester**

Sir: As a Scot who lives in England and who believes in the Union, I would like to ask Mr Blair: "Why are the English and Northern Irish not being consulted over devolution?"

We live in the United Kingdom,

created by the Act of Union 1707 and the English, Northern Irish, Scots and the Welsh must be consulted as equal partners. **The Rev PAUL WILLIAMSON, Hanworth, Middlesex**

Victorian 'care in the community'

Sir: Andreas Whitlam Smith's article of 13 May, "The man who abolished madness", arouses the ire of the consultant psychiatrist Dr Peter White (letter, 14 May).

Those of us in the profession who appreciate Largactil but would like to convince colleagues that the meaning of schizophrenic communication may be understood and used to help patients alongside drug treatment are not assisted in this aim by such hyperbole and wholesale attacks on psychiatrists for hospitalisation. Mr Whitlam Smith should read the report of the mid-19th-century Royal Commission on the dreadful conditions endured by the insane in the community then - often cared for by lay people. Laignans are misinformed to suggest that all compassion and "attunement" resides with them. To quote another literary reference, Charles Lamb, whose devotion to his sister Mary was exemplary, nevertheless from time to time found it necessary for her to have a spell in hospital for her madness.

There is to be an international conference in October in London on psychotherapy and

schizophrenia which will address some of the problems. **Dr ISOBEL HUNTER-BROWN Leicester**

Designing the millennium

Sir: The report (16 May) about the Millennium Exhibition and the role of the design company Imagination contained a number of inaccuracies. Imagination has worked as a consultant to the project on a series of rolling contracts. The last of these expired at the end of March, following which Imagination advised Millennium Central (the exhibition organisers) that it felt it was now appropriate for the design work to pause until Millennium Central is in position to issue specific design briefs.

It is quite wrong to suggest that there were cost overruns on any aspect of the content design. At all times Imagination has worked strictly to the project budgets set by the exhibition organisers in January of this year.

Imagination remains fully committed to the successful realisation of the Millennium Exhibition at Greenwich and has advised Millennium Central that it would be happy to respond to any future briefs. **PAUL MACKAY Director, Imagination London WC1**

That's enough

Sir: Eighteen days of Labour rule - time for a change? **GERALD LEBEVE London, SW12**

Unknown waste of water

Sir: As a former senior water engineer of the pre-privatisation era I am concerned to see how the leakage rates of the various water companies are being generally quoted as though they were gospel. Matthew Taylor in his article "Lessons in how to run water" (19 May) is the latest politician to quote a 30 per cent leakage figure as though it were a proven fact.

Until there is metering of all supplies no one can say how much water is lost in the distribution system. The present means of arriving at leakage is by estimating the daily unmetred consumption of each household and making other basic assumptions on legitimate uses: the estimated leakage is then the difference between those totals and the amounts supplied into the system. An Ofwat report of May last year made it clear that there are "significant uncertainties in leak reporting".

By all means ensure that the water companies reduce their waste of water in these times of drought, but let us have some caution in the figures quoted. **JOHN FAIRBANK Hove, East Sussex**

Bike cities of the future

Sir: The recent letters from those who perceive all cyclists to be law-breakers couldn't be due to jealousy, could they? After years of woeful provision we are finally getting at least some of the cycle-friendly amenities common on the Continent. Last week in Sunderland, a dual-carriageway road was made into single-carriageway after a cycle lane was installed. This, quite naturally, encourages some motorists.

However, provision for cyclists will encourage some motorists to cycle rather than drive. When 15 per cent of the traffic is made up of cyclists (York sometimes comes close), city centres are transformed for the better. Cars can no longer break the law by speeding - too many people in the way - and cyclists and pedestrians can travel in safety, persuading even more people to choose transport options other than the motor car. **CARLTON REID Publisher, "On Yer Bike" Newcastle upon Tyne**

Cut off on the motorway

Sir: *The Independent* (15 May) contains as usual an advertisement from a mobile phone operator - in this case Orange - claiming to cover somewhat over 90 per cent of the UK population. All four operators make similar claims.

As one who in recent weeks has made considerable use of in-car mobile phones from at least three of the systems currently operating - including Orange - I wonder if one of them can explain how they have managed to corral the uncovered 8 per cent - or whatever - to inhabit 100-yard strips at two- or three-mile intervals along the sides of major roads and motorways. This has led to calls being regularly cut off and on reconnection punishing the poor consumer for a failure by the operator by charging them again the minimum connection charge. **GLYN FORD MEP (Greater Manchester East, Lab) Brussels**

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

essay

The Indian conquest of English

The new novels of India are being read around the world, but they are being written in the language of the conqueror. Peter Popham explores an improbable success

Fifty years after India's independence, we in Britain seem far more enthusiastic about marking the golden jubilee than India itself. It is not hard to see why. For India, the attainment of freedom was overshadowed by Partition, and the massacres and mass migrations that accompanied it; any celebration is bound to be tinged with bitter regret. For the British, on the other hand, it is as one cynic put it, "the anniversary of our munificence in giving away such a jewel".

But if that is one rather creepy, narcissistic reason for cheer, there is another which is perhaps better founded. Indian English goes from strength to strength. The conqueror's tongue, so useful in enabling educated Indians from every part of the country to talk to each other on linguistically neutral ground, has not merely survived Britain's departure: it has gone on to achieve an extraordinary identity of its own. Thanks to Salman Rushdie more than any other single individual, it has risen to the challenge of evoking the phantasmagoria of India. In becoming emancipated from British English, it has not become quaint or folkloric in any normal meaning of the term. It requires no indulgences. Yet all this is from a country that is about as culturally remote from Britain as it is possible to be. In which English remains the medium of a tiny minority. Its richness and vitality are mysterious.

The best Indians write so well that their work betrays no effort. But there is no doubt that the effort required to master such an alien tongue is immense. In a contribution to the recent issue of *Granta* devoted to India, Nirad Chaudhuri, the Indian author,



who was 100 last year, described his own method. "I did not learn English from Englishmen," he wrote, "nor hear it spoken by native speakers till late in life." He learned enough from his Bengali teachers "so that when I entered university life in 1914 I didn't have to consult dictionaries... Nonetheless an acute anxiety troubled me when I was writing my first book, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, in 1947 and 1948. I asked myself whether what I was writing would sound like English to those born to the language. I knew, unless it did, no English publisher would accept my book.

"I adopted a special method to rid myself of the worry. I read what I had written aloud and then also read a passage from some great book of English prose in the same way. If the two sound effects agreed I passed my writing...



Jewels in the literary crown: (clockwise from top right) Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, and Nirad Chaudhuri

This method proved itself. When, after the publication of my book in England on 8 September 1952, the BBC read out certain passages from it, I said to myself: "That was the sound I had in my mind's ear."

Since Chaudhuri's debut in the year of independence, recognition in the West of Indian literary achievement has been slow to build. But after the success of Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Anita Desai, Rohinton Mistry and a handful of others, the door has been battered down; hopeful young Indians carting their manuscripts to publishers in London or New York today find they have arrived in the middle of a modest but palpable Indian boom.

The most celebrated beneficiary of the boom so far is Arundhati Roy, a woman from Kerala in the extreme south, whose first novel, *The God of Small Things*, is published by Flamingo in three weeks. Roy, who trained as an architect in Delhi and has had two of her scripts filmed to critical acclaim, gained instant fame when the London agent David Godwin, stunned by her manuscript, took the first plane to Delhi and signed her up. That judgement was confirmed when world rights were bought for half a million pounds.

Roy is the rarest sort of commodity in publishing, being possessed of an amazing elan beauty as well as great talent. But there is nothing commodity-like about the book itself: the result of five years' work, it is deeply personal, and so vivid that its evocations of the Kerala landscape colonize the reader's

own imagination. It also displays to the greatest degree possible the special Indian relationship with English, possessing the extreme intimacy that is the fruit of the sort of effort Chaudhuri writes of; yet simultaneously able to play with the language in a way that only those raised some distance from the birthplace of English – whether Irish, African or Indian – seem capable.

But Roy is also painfully aware of the problematic cultural implications of the intimacy which she enjoys. "Annu said that Pappachi was an incurable British CCP," she writes in *The God of Small Things*, "which was short for chhi-chhi-poch and in Hindi meant shit-wiper. Chacko said that the correct word for people like Pappachi was Anglophile... Chacko told the twins that though he hated to admit it, they were all Anglophiles. They were a family of Anglophiles. Pointed in the wrong direction, trapped outside their steps because their footprints had been swept away..."

Roy is one of the newer Indian writers introduced this week on Radio 3 by Noah Richler in a series of five programmes. Taken together they give a good indication of the variety and multifarious richness of Indian writing today. Shashi Tharoor is there, satirical author of *Show Business*, a farce about Bollywood, and *The Great Indian Novel*, whose previous day job was head of peacekeeping for the UN in Bosnia, and who is now secretary to Kofi Annan, the UN secretary-general.

Upamanyu Chatterjee's first novel, entitled *English, August*, describes the

coming of age of a young civil servant dispatched to the formidable trouble zone of the state of Bihar. Chatterjee now works as he chief of Bombay's slum redevelopment office. He describes himself as writing "as a gentleman plays cricket" and aims to write one novel every Olympics.

Mukul Kesava is the only one of the five who is overtly indebted to the Salman Rushdie school of magic realism: his novel *Looking Through the Backwards-Forwards View Glass* is a fall through history to the time of Partition, the horror of prescience relieved by fantastic humour. Finally there is Vikram Chandra, who has followed his door-stopping debut novel, *Red Earth and Pouring Rain*, with a collection of stories entitled *Love and Longing in Bombay*. With his light American accent and openness to American influences such as Raymond Chandler, Chandra represents a growing trend among the younger generation of studying in the United States and then staying where they are. Many of India's better-known writers have settled abroad.

Yet the example of Arundhati Roy and the others demonstrate that the wellsprings of English within India still flow abundantly. But what exactly is their writing for? Are they writing purely for themselves? For their peers within Indian cities? Or for the benefit of the whole world?

Arundhati Roy, according to Noel Richler, is "writing out of her own need and urgency": certainly her book has an intensity and brilliance that renders such questions largely redundant. Rich-

ler points out, however, that both Shashi Tharoor and Roy herself are Bengali (Roy part-Bengali), and therefore part of the rich Bengali literary tradition. Throughout India's big cities, there are closely printed, densely written broadsheet newspapers and weekly and monthly magazines; and the highly articulate, reception given to India-related projects like the new *Granta*, testifies to the liveliness of the literary world within India.

And then there is the world beyond, the huge importance of getting a British or American publisher, the lure of Arundhati-sized advances. "Part of you," Richler suggests, "is inevitably writing with the world in mind."

Yet the contradictions and the difficulties remain: of writing for the world about your own country, when the vast majority of your compatriots will not understand what you are saying.

"People ask me sometimes, who are you writing for?" Vikram Chandra tells Noah Richler in the course of one of the Radio 3 programmes. "Are you writing for a western audience or an Indian audience? But that distinction falls apart when you look at it a little more closely. What is meant by an Indian audience? Are we talking about the intellectuals in Bombay or the tea-planners in Darjeeling? ... What you can finally tell stories for are the people who are sitting right in front of you. Once it goes over the loudspeakers out into the world outside, you have no control over it."

The writer has been appointed India correspondent for *The Independent*.

it pays to be in the public sector

15% discount on our life, home and motor insurance

We're the specialists in insurance for public sector employees, offering a 15% discount on any policy you buy, whether it's for Life, Home or Motor.

Life Insurance. Take out one of our life policies and you can enjoy peace of mind, knowing your family is protected. We offer Mortgage Protection, Term Assurance and Critical Illness.

Home Insurance. All our Buildings and Contents policies come with a free 24-Hour Emergency Assistance Line in conjunction with Green Flag Ltd.

Motor Insurance. The benefits of our comprehensive Motor Insurance include free 24-hour Breakdown Cover with Green Flag Ltd.

For excellent service, competitive rates and a free quotation call now.

0800 147 147 Life insurance

Open: 9am-8pm Mon to Fri, 9am-1pm Sat
The life service is not available in the Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man.
For your security all telephone calls on the above number will be recorded and randomly monitored.

0800 86 86 86 Home insurance

Open: 8am-8pm Mon to Fri, 9am-1pm Sat

0800 22 66 77 Comprehensive Motor insurance

Please quote the reference IN2005
The home and motor service is not available in Northern Ireland, Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man.
Zurich Municipal is a trading name of Zurich Life Assurance Company Limited, which is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority. For life insurance and investment business, Zurich Municipal markets the life products of Zurich Life only and does not provide financial advice.
Zurich Life Assurance Company Ltd is registered in England. No. 678139.
Cover and premiums are subject to individual assessment.

ZURICH MUNICIPAL

Focusing on the Public Sector

First, smoke your rhododendron

Every year about 5,000 new cookery books come out. Next year they will all be remembered because nobody can make up their mind which one to buy. To avoid that terrible waste, we are introducing a new service that sifts through all the new cookery books and recommends the best to you. Here to kick off is the pick of all the cookery books published over the weekend.

'The River Café Cookbook' by Emma Thripp (Carlin Press, £10.99)
The River Café is a small eating place in the North of England which is cashing in on its similarity in name to the River Café in the hope that lots of people will buy this cookbook by mistake. It contains over 100 recipes involving black pudding.

'Cooking With Flowers' by Percival Forster (Winstan Press, £19.99)
Every cookery book imagines it is making a breakthrough, but this one genuinely does seem to be treading fresh territory. We may have occasionally come across deep fried courgette hooms, and rose petals are not unknown in the kitchen, but

a whole book devoted to the cooking of flowers is ambitious indeed. Of the recipes we tried, rosemary flower bread was good, apple blossom pudding was delicious and daffodil pie unspeakable. Smoked rhododendron blooms are not as bad as they sound, but nearly. *'Islandic Cooking - the Cuisine Nobody Knows'* by Per Ulfsson (Deep Freeze Press, £19.99)
Although publishers are always on the look-out for countries whose cooking has yet to become popular, they should be warned that Scandinavian cooking is very hard to sell to the British public. (A book called *Finland Eating* is said to have sold not a single copy.) This book, with its beary horse steaks and endless ice creams, may do well, but we have our doubts. There is much emphasis on cooking over peat, perhaps in an attempt to outdo the River Café's recent conversion to wood cooking.

'Post-River Café Cooking Theory' by Deirdre Stigwood (Lychee Press, £19.99)
Not strictly a cookbook - there are no actual recipes in



Miles Kingston

it - this does provide a useful gloss on the way we cook now. Stigwood points out that the River Café has become famous despite most people not knowing where it is or having eaten there. She points out that people talk about River Café style as being more important than the place itself and argues, startlingly, that the River Café does not even need to exist - that one could have a new style based on a purely putative restaurant. There have been cookbooks based

on fictional characters (a Margret cookery book, for instance) so why not on fictional restaurants? She concludes: "If Della Smith did not exist, it would not be necessary to invent her." We have not the faintest idea what she is on about, but the pictures are nice.

'Choosing Your Name' by Patsy Boulton (Grassini Books, £19.99)
Miss Boulton's thesis is that many cooks owe their success to their name, and that you should invent one carefully if you are after fame. Floyd was a good name, because it lent itself to alliteration - Floyd on Fish, Floyd on Fire, etc. Marco Pierre White was a silly name but it did combine three nationalities - Italian, French, English - in a way that suggested the eclecticism of the man's cooking. Ken Hom she approves of, because, as she says, "the British can take a Chinaman only when one of his names is Chinese and the other English". She is at a loss to explain how a man called Rick Stein became a popular cook, but otherwise is very good.

'The River Café Cookbook' by Eddie Shawarma (Placebo Press, £19.99)
An attempt to cash in on the success of the River Café Cookbook. To be avoided, on the whole.
'The Eric Cantona Cookery Book' by Eric Cantona with others (Bulfinch Books, £19.99)
This is, apparently, Eric Cantona's first cookbook, though it is difficult to tell whether the pieces it contains are recipes or poems. Take this, for instance: "If there were no dogs in the world, would the sardine be man's best friend? Only the seagull can tell. Grill and serve."
'The Prison Cook Book' by Mrs Michael Howard (Wormwood Press, £19.99)
The wife of the former Home Secretary achieved passing notoriety for suggesting that prison food was too good for them. Now she puts action into words by producing a model prison cookbook, and most of the dishes described would, indeed, be more of a deterrent than her husband's policies. We especially liked the title of her chapter on Breton onions: "String 'Em Up, I Say!"

Who's the West que

The voice
J
Andreas Whitman Smith
The Big issue runs strong campaigns, outells The Economist, owes nothing to market research and, best of all, it's a good read

مكتبة من المجلد

صدا من الامم

the commentators

Who's afraid of the West Lothian question?

He's back. And so is his famous question. It was possible, listening to Tam Dalyell talking about the problems thrown up by the powers devolved to a Scottish parliament, to imagine yourself transported back to 1978. It sounded so familiar, hearing Dalyell warning like Cassandra that one day there would be a government that wouldn't tolerate him and his parliamentary neighbour Robin Cook being "able to vote on housing, education and health in West Lothian, but not in West Lothian".

This time there is a difference: unlike the tottering minority government of 19 years ago, this one can ignore Dalyell. With a huge majority, a Scottish MP-free Tory party, and home rule referendums planned for what will still be its honeymoon period, why should it worry about the wrinkle of Scottish MPs at Westminster being able to vote on policies which only apply in England and Wales?

It is easy to understand why so many Scottish politicians are dismissive when their English counterparts bleat about the West Lothian question. English Tory politicians throw up their hands in horror at the idea of Scottish MPs voting on matters which only concern England without showing any signs of having recognised how long the reverse has been true. For 18 years an English Tory majority imposed its will, poll tax included, on a Labour-voting Scottish people without turning a hair. It was, after all, partly to remedy that injustice that the momentum for home rule developed. But building into a system the possibility that somewhere, far over the horizon, English and Welsh voters might have policies imposed on them by a majority of Scottish MPs is only desirable if you believe revenge is a suitable basis for constitutional reform – and don't mind the English nationalist tensions that such an outcome would generate.

There have been at least two answers to the Lothian question, both of them canvassed by the Lib Dems. The Government's line, so far, is that all the question exposes is a potential anomaly in the British constitution, that the constitution is full of anomalies, and anyway no one objected to Northern Ireland MPs voting on mainland issues. And that's, er, it.

The Lib Dems, by contrast, have proposed that the anomaly would be eased by reducing the present 72 Scottish MPs – who currently represent 55,000 voters on average – to a number proportionately closer to the English, who represent 68,000 on average. In the short term this has disadvantages for both Lib Dems – currently sitting for territorially huge, sparsely populated seats – and for Labour, with the risk of "warfare" in the remaining constituencies.

That fear may be exaggerated; won't the Scottish parliament itself open up just the kind of alternative career path for Labour politicians that would prevent that happening?

Less formally, the Lib Dems have floated the idea that Scottish MPs should exclude themselves from voting on issues which in Scotland are the province of the Scottish parliament. This, the so-called "In and Out" solution, is hardly a new idea, though it is a real answer. The Scotsman advocated it before the election – just a few days after it had been pointed out



Donald Macintyre
The Government line is that the question only exposes an anomaly, but the constitution is full of anomalies anyway. And that's, er, it

clear at the time, was arguing that there were no solutions to the problems he saw in home rule. If his remark meant anything, it was that we shouldn't have a Scottish parliament.

As the Scottish academic Bill Miller has frequently pointed out, governments with convincing UK majorities have also had majorities in England. Indeed, only the 1964 government and the first one in 1974 haven't. That is sometimes used as an argument for saying the West Lothian question doesn't matter because it would so infrequently make a difference in practice. But if the principle is wrong, it is wrong whatever the parliamentary arithmetic. In fact the Miller figures simply show that in practice a Labour government has little to fear from excluding Scottish MPs from solely English and Welsh matters.

It is worth remembering that the Scottish referendum, good as the auspices are, isn't yet won. A powerful argument for the parliament, that a Labour Scotland doesn't want to be controlled by a politically alien administration, is inevitably reduced when the UK majority is the same as Scotland's. At least one Scottish Labour backbencher (without anti-devolutionist form) was struck, during the election campaign, by how divided his constituents seemed to be on the issue.

At the moment the Scottish Tories couldn't fight their way out of a wet paper bag, but the threat that some future Tory government might arbitrarily and brutally reduce Scottish representation could yet be used to deter some support in the referendum. It would be well for the Government, as the Lib Dems have done, to think creatively about the answers to Dalyell's tiresome, repetitive but inescapable question.

Giants who outgrow the back pages

by Rupert Cornwell

The retirement of Eric Cantona is not only a grievous blow to everyone professing faith in Manchester United Football Club. A hole has been torn in the heart of the country's life – or, more exactly, in the heart of the media.

A new candidate (or candidates) is required to fill the unofficial post of national sporting celebrity. Preferably he or she should be British. But Europeans, even Latin Americans, will be given equal consideration. Exceptional ability in the chosen sport is essential, as is charisma. Most vices and eccentricities will be welcome to the selection board. Applicants need not put their names forward in writing. They will be informally notified of their appointment when their name(s) appear in headlines on the front page of every national newspaper. Clearly, the selection process is highly unpredictable. But here are a few guidelines to go by.

Rule number one, of course: you must be good. Intelligence and unusual behaviour help; but the most glittering mind, the most brazen gifts of self-promotion, the most titillating excesses with drugs, drink or the ladies will avail nothing without outstanding skills to attract attention in the first place.

In some cases, huge talent on its own can be enough. Tiger Woods is the obvious example, mesmerising golf spectators and newspaper editors alike not so much because he is black, but because he is so phenomenally good. Or take Tim Henman at tennis, whose talent has yet to be fully measured. He does not swear at umpires, as does John McEnroe. To judge by what you read (or rather, don't), his off-court life is unblemished, unassuming and unremarkable. Were he to win at Wimbledon, though, he would generate more headlines than Tony Blair.

For those of only fractionally lesser talent, however, what cliché holds less media promise than a manager's hackneyed description of his charge as a "great ambassador for the game"? Notoriety is the lifeblood of celebrity. The front pages demand not perfect diplomats, but lousy, indiscreet and failed ones.

Eric Cantona, however, does not quite fit any of these categories. Clearly there is more to him than wonderful skills on the football field. Yet over the past five years he has engaged not in self-destruction but in resurrection, both of himself and of Manchester United. Equally clearly, as a citizen of the ancestral enemy from across the Channel, he hardly qualifies as an all-English role model. Yet, unless you hail from Leeds, the odds are that you love him. Why? Because of his mystique and aloofness, the dash of Gallic arrogance mitigated by his evident enjoyment at being here. But, no less, simply because he is different.

If Alan Shearer likened a run by Juninho to a sunset by Keats, he would be laughed out of court. "Pure magic, Gary" is as close as is permitted to cerebral outpouring by our native footballing sons. But Eric le



Fame beyond the arena: (from left) Ian Botham, George Best, Muhammad Ali, Tiger Woods and Eric Cantona

Newspaper front pages demand not perfect diplomats, but lousy, indiscreet and failed ones

destroy the foe from Down Under had you forgiving his cavortings and braggadocio.

Eric Cantona, however, does not quite fit any of these categories. Clearly there is more to him than wonderful skills on the football field. Yet over the past five years he has engaged not in self-destruction but in resurrection, both of himself and of Manchester United. Equally clearly, as a citizen of the ancestral enemy from across the Channel, he hardly qualifies as an all-English role model. Yet, unless you hail from Leeds, the odds are that you love him. Why? Because of his mystique and aloofness, the dash of Gallic arrogance mitigated by his evident enjoyment at being here. But, no less, simply because he is different.

If Alan Shearer likened a run by Juninho to a sunset by Keats, he would be laughed out of court. "Pure magic, Gary" is as close as is permitted to cerebral outpouring by our native footballing sons. But Eric le

persoir can muse about becoming a film director (*nouvelle vague Mancunienne?*) and claim to find as much beauty in a pass by Pele as in a stanza by Rimbaud, and get away with it. Cross the Channel, and pseudo-intellectuals become the real thing. That is the other comfort provided by Cantona. We have taken a Frenchman, no less, to our hearts. Who can call us blinkered Europhobes?

The gap he leaves is therefore huge. But alongside that of one sporting immortal, it pales. The halcyon years of Muhammad Ali were before today's supercharged cocktail of sport, money and media. All of course, did not need it. He possessed everything required for sporting celebrity, and more. His professional skills were humours, but his mind outside the ring was as fast as his feet and by skin colour, he was pushed to the centre of the controversies of his age. "I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietnams."

In Ali, self-promotion fused with promotion of the cause. Yet he loved his sport to an excess that was to destroy him.

If Cantona's appeal is complex, Ali's remains more complicated and even greater. He was a black radical who challenged a white government – but came to be loved by that very same establishment, anxious to atone for its sense of racial guilt. Today the tragic ravages of Parkinson's disease only make him more compelling. The sports celebrity has transcended not just his sport, but all sport. One can only guess at the role a healthy and articulate Muhammad Ali – not the pathetic figure we prayed would not fall as he climbed to light the Olympic

flame in Atlanta – might have played in the quest for racial healing in America and beyond.

Today, though, he is a spent force, and now that Cantona has departed, the celebrity stage is oddly vacant. On this side of the Atlantic at least, Michael Jordan doesn't resonate, while the Gascoigne star is fading. With his recent pointed criticism of President Clinton for racial pandering, young Tiger is showing serious promise of celebrity beyond the sports pages – but not quite yet. The shift to the "New News" of the "Old News" of Cold War ideology and the rest, means the bar to be cleared in the leap from the back pages to the front has been lowered. Football, central as once before to national life, is the natural source of new material, but somehow Zola, Juninho and the rest of the foreign legion don't fill Cantona's boots, and the vacancy exists. Probably, however, not for long. Like nature, celebrity abhors a vacuum. Just watch the front pages.

The Open University

FRENCH OR GERMAN

Do you want to improve your French or German – for career, pleasure or both?

DIPLOMA IN FRENCH OR GERMAN

The Open University's Centre for Modern Languages offers courses to help you enhance your knowledge of the language and culture of France or Germany leading to the award of a diploma. All you need is a basic knowledge of the language you want to study.

OU SUPPORTED OPEN LEARNING

Our proven method of learning allows you to study wherever you live and in your own time. You will be using specially written course books, study guides and audio visual materials, backed up by personal tutorial and counselling support.

STUDY PACKS

The courses are also available as packs, enabling you to study on your own without registering as a student. Please complete the coupon or ring the OU hotline today for a brochure giving complete course details.

Complete and send this coupon to: M157P
The Open University, PO Box 625 Milton Keynes MK1 1TY.
Please send me details of your (please tick)
☐ French language courses ☐ German language courses
☐ Study Packs
Name _____
Address _____
Postcode _____
To save time call the hotline 01908 376554
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION & TRAINING OPEN TO ALL ADULTS

The voice of the streets is worth hearing



Andreas Whittam Smith

'The Big Issue' runs strong campaigns, outsells 'The Economist', owes nothing to market research and, best of all, it's a good read

Just recently I came to the conclusion that *The Big Issue*, which I regularly buy on the street, is an excellent magazine which I would rather read than *The Economist*, *The Spectator*, *The New Statesman* or *Time Out*. It describes itself as "Coming up from the streets" and its reporting lives up to the claim. *The Big Issue* interviews people who, whether in or out of work, whether living in their own homes or homeless, are struggling to lead decent lives and it illustrates their hopes, their fears and their predicaments. We hear voices rarely recorded by conventional publications.

If I say that the magazine mounts strong campaigns, as it has in recent issues against the careless use of electric shock treatment on mentally ill patients in hospitals, then I am in danger of implying that the magazine is worthy but dull. Not at all. In a recent issue its opening pages ran straight from an A to Z on homelessness to a fashion piece on sunglasses to a feature on the underground author, Q, whose first novel, *Deadman*, was originally sold in serial form around London's clubs.

The Big Issue previews the coming week in music, clubs, film, books, performance, TV and art. It often publishes a half-page of "street poetry". And invariably, on its last editorial page, under the heading "Initiative", the magazine gives details of four missing persons, with pictures and mini profiles, and asks readers to support the National Missing Persons' Helpline. I also like *The Big Issue* for what it isn't. It is neither smart-alec nor sneering.

I am not alone. The magazine's weekly sales have reached 280,000; it thus easily outsells *The Economist* in the UK (108,000), *The Spectator* (56,000), *The New Statesman* (20,000) and *Time Out* (106,000). It carries consumer advertising, especially from the music industry,

and recruitment advertisements from the voluntary sector. Moreover, *The Big Issue* is profitable. The world-wide sale of this is not a normal magazine sold in a conventional way. Indeed not. It is wonderfully peculiar.

It was founded in 1991 to give homeless people the chance to make an income by selling the magazine; it would be for them an alternative to begging. Actually there hasn't been a stranger reason for starting publication since *The Daily Telegraph* was founded in 1855 in pursuit of a vendetta by a Colonel Sleight against the Duke of Cambridge, commander-in-chief of the Army and Queen Victoria's cousin. In this case, Gordon Roddick of the Body Shop had seen *Street News*, a newspaper sold by homeless people in New York, and brought the idea back to London where John Bird turned it into reality.

The nature of the encounter between *The Big Issue* vendors and their customers is different from, say, buying an evening paper outside a railway station. In the first transaction, emotion is present. As an alternative to begging it works both ways. Undoubtedly, for some purchasers who are not yet used to the magazine and have not yet grown to like it, buying it is a charitable donation. A part of each week's sale must be accounted for in this way.

In my experience, on the other hand, the vendors are unfailingly polite and pleasant. A virtuous circle develops. You like the magazine; you buy it from the same person in the street; some words about the publication may be exchanged; the transaction is a good one. Without this benign process the magazine could never have succeeded.

The vendors have driven the sale of *The Big Issue*. Before selling the magazine on the street, many were labourers, but half have qualifications in trades from carpentry to catering; about 13 per



Vendors can gauge likely sales from the appearance of the cover

cent once held professional appointments such as psychologist, engineer, teacher or nurse, before losing their jobs and falling into homelessness. Not many sleep rough nowadays; most have temporary accommodation in hostels, squats or friends' places.

The vendors did not like the monthly publishing interval with which *The Big Issue* began. They found that sales petered out after about two weeks and likewise their income – they keep just over half the cover price. They expressed their views. Within a year the magazine began to publish fortnightly and then a few months later, in June 1993, it became a weekly. The vendors continue to make their opinion of the magazine's covers known. They can estimate their sale from its appearance.

Nothing would have been possible, however, without John Bird. He founded the magazine and edited it for a lengthy period. Now he is editor-in-chief and chairman of the trustees of the Big Issue Foundation. The foundation helps vendors to find accommodation, it locates and funds places for them on training and education courses, and it runs workshops designed to rebuild their self-confidence.

John Bird is an idealist who focuses on a single question: is what we are doing going to help homeless people? *The Big Issue*'s new editor, Becky Gardiner, formerly of *The Independent* and *Sunday*, has a parallel obsession – how to get ordinary people's voices heard.

To borrow a phrase from the Sixties, *The Big Issue* is a successful example of the counter-culture. For instance, it owes nothing to market research. It has not been carefully targeted at a nice market where, after much analysis, it is believed readers with spending power can be reached. The comments which the vendors make about each issue are of a different order to those derived from the carefully-balanced focus groups employed by conventional publishers. The magazine likewise owes nothing to its advertisers. It welcomes them and sells to them in a conventional manner, but it does not put them at the centre of its universe as do, say, women's and men's magazines.

But *The Big Issue* illustrates the most important rule of all: the success of a publication is ultimately determined by the character of its editor. What is sought is lucky coincidence between the beliefs, prejudices, ambitions, preoccupations and quirks of the editor and a sufficient number of readers. Editors have to be resolutely themselves. They must resist being programmed by business managers. Striking attitudes does not work. *The Big Issue* is authentic, it is true to itself – that is why I like it.

business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNERTax revenue
surge cheers
ChancellorDiane Coyle
Economics Editor

There was welcome news for the Government yesterday from figures showing that the public finances were in surplus in the last month before the election. Buoyant tax revenues mean the Treasury will be able to reduce its target for this year's public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR) in the Budget next month.

In a speech to the Confederation of British Industry tonight, Gordon Brown will promise to be tough on public spending and borrowing. He will say: "In my first Budget I will be looking to the long-term needs of the British economy. I will set tough rules for government borrowing and spending. I will publish a plan for deficit reduction over the medium term."

Yesterday also brought a survey showing consumer confidence has surged to its highest

level for nine years in a bout of post-election euphoria. By far the biggest improvements occurred in Scotland and Wales, the two regions which voted all their Conservative MPs out of office.

The monthly survey of consumer confidence carried out by GfK for the European Commission shows a big jump in optimism about the economy and household finances in the fortnight immediately after the general election. The balance of optimists over pessimists was, at 6 per cent, the highest since August 1988.

Commenting on the results, Ben Sanderson of Nottingham Trent University said: "The latest survey suggests that New Labour means new confidence."

He said the figures indicated that consumers would probably spend rather than save the free share handouts from building societies this summer. Nearly a fifth said they planned big purchases during the next 12 months.

On top of this return of the feelgood factor, the run of favourable economic news inherited from former Chancellor Kenneth Clarke continued yesterday.

New figures showed that government revenues exceeded expenditure by £36m in April. City experts had expected a shortfall of more than £1bn.

Although caution is needed in drawing conclusions from the first month of the financial year, the trends suggest that the PSBR for 1997/98 could be much lower than the £19bn forecast in last November's Budget.

The Treasury said special factors helped explain April's surplus. The sale of Ministry of Defence married quarters and the Housing Corporation loan book brought one-off reductions of £700m each. The switch to quarterly VAT payments on account accounted for up to £1bn of the £1.4bn in total VAT receipts compared with last April.

A spokesman said the Chancellor was determined to see significant further progress before he could be confident that the public finances were on a sound long term footing.

Even so, yesterday's figures diminished expectations that Gordon Brown will opt to raise extra taxes in his first Budget, due next month.

"A significant downward revision to the Treasury's PSBR forecast in the forthcoming Budget seems certain," said John O'Sullivan, an economist at NatWest Markets.

Excluding the one-off asset sales, central government spending was about 1 per cent higher than a year earlier, well on target to meet the tough public spending plans set out in the last Budget and adopted by the new Government.

Tax revenues were 12.5 per cent up on the year, well ahead of the Treasury forecast. Apart from VAT, income tax and national insurance contributions are growing strongly, reflecting rising employment.

There is clear evidence that the public finances are benefiting from the strength of the economy," said Jonathan Lynes at HSBC Markets. But he said borrowing remained too high for this stage of the economic cycle.

Comment, page 21

Nikko warns on
Social Chapter

After the backlash over the planned windfall tax last week comes the first sign of discontent with the Government's pledge to sign up to the EU's Social Chapter.

The deputy chairman of the investment bank Nikko Europe warned yesterday that this could threaten future inward investment in the UK.

Haruko Fukuda said, in a speech to the Euroseptic Bruges Group, that Labour's move would create uncertainty about the future business environment in Britain in the minds of Japanese investors.

"Japanese businessmen will therefore be watching very closely over the next few months to see whether the new Labour government takes measures either in the social security, or in the employment or in the corporate tax fields which make it less attractive for Japanese shareholders to invest in Britain rather than elsewhere," she said.

Echoing the caution of the last government, she said: "The philosophy of social Europe appears to be one which finds its ideal where all European industry is equally uncompetitive."

"I find it difficult to believe that such a social Europe would be attractive to foreign investors."

The worry was that the Social Chapter was an unknown quantity, with very little legislation actually passed under its auspices so far, Miss Fukuda said.

It was a "bulging pipeline of unspecified employment legislation."

In addition, the Labour Party remained an unknown quantity to Japanese investors.

Miss Fukuda said: "Signing up to the Social Chapter is a reversal of the hard-won radical change in the business culture in the UK of the past 18 years which has been so clearly recognised and admired by the international business community."

Board and pension fund trustees go to court over way £62m surplus was divided



Gathering support: Pensioners Reg Mayes (left) and David Laws, who brought the case against the National Grid

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

A landmark ruling by the pensions ombudsman requiring National Grid to repay £46m to its pension fund included an "astonishing proposition" which would prevent the company from ever reducing its contributions.

The court heard details of discussions between the Grid's board and its pension fund trustees after the £62.3m surplus was identified following a valuation by the actuary Bacon and Woodrow in 1992. In April 1993 the trustees had called for the cash to be divided equally between the company and the pensioners, but were overruled by the board. The Grid's chosen option was to give 30 per

cent of the surplus to pensioners in enhanced benefits and allocated the rest to the company, partly to help fund early retirement costs from its redundancy programme.

If the pensioners and the ombudsman defeat the appeal it could leave the privatised electricity companies with a bill of up to £1bn. A further valuation of the pension schemes was carried out in 1995 which identified another large surplus.

Worst hit would be National

National Grid fights
ombudsman's ruling

the surplus to cover future company liabilities.

The court heard details of discussions between the Grid's board and its pension fund trustees after the £62.3m surplus was identified following a valuation by the actuary Bacon and Woodrow in 1992. In April 1993 the trustees had called for the cash to be divided equally between the company and the pensioners, but were overruled by the board. The Grid's chosen option was to give 30 per

cent of the surplus to pensioners in enhanced benefits and allocated the rest to the company, partly to help fund early retirement costs from its redundancy programme.

If the pensioners and the ombudsman defeat the appeal it could leave the privatised electricity companies with a bill of up to £1bn. A further valuation of the pension schemes was carried out in 1995 which identified another large surplus.

Worst hit would be National

Power, the generator, which could be asked to pay back as much as £200m, while Eastern Electricity has confirmed its liability would be £75m. National Power is due to bring its own pre-emptive court case later this year.

The court was packed with Grid pensioners for the hearing including David Laws and Reg Mayes who brought the case. At one stage the ombudsman, Dr Julian Farrand, appeared in the courtroom but was unable

to find a seat. Dr Farrand has declined to be represented.

Flanked by supportive pensioners carrying banners with the words "National Greed" Mr Laws claimed the case would clarify the rights of pensioners over fund surpluses.

The ombudsman had said the rules of the Electricity Supply Pension Scheme, the umbrella fund, prohibited payments to the employer.

However, Mr Crampin said in certain circumstances they could be allowed, including cases where the surplus was used to pay for future benefits.

"Where a surplus has been identified that surplus is available to pre-fund employer contributions," he said.

The case continues today, and is expected to last a week.

BT and Sky broaden digital alliance

Cathy Newman

Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB is bolstering its bid for digital terrestrial television by bringing in British Interactive Broadcasting to provide interactive services.

If British Digital Broadcasting succeeds in its digital terrestrial licence bid, the new link would give BT a back-door into terrestrial television via a powerful alliance with BSkyB.

The business union of the two giants - BT and BSkyB - is causing concern among industry regulators.

While analysts were not surprised by yesterday's news, it did increase pressure on British Digital Broadcasting's only rival, Digital Television Network, which has based much of its bid for a digital terrestrial licence around the quality of its interactive offering.

British Digital Broadcasting is battling hard to persuade the Independent Television Commission, the industry regulator, that its services have as much potential for interactivity as

those proposed by Digital Television Network.

Both Digital Television Network, which is owned by CableTel, and British Digital Broadcasting have been quietly attempting to address any weaknesses in their bids before the Independent Television Commission makes a decision on the licences in the next few weeks.

Earlier this month, Digital Television Network strengthened its programming proposition by announcing that United

News & Media would take a 30 per cent stake in it if it won a digital terrestrial television licence.

United controls the Anglia and Meridian ITV franchises.

While British Digital Broadcasting has claimed United's role in the Digital Television Network offering constitutes a "material change" to the bid, BDB's talks with BII are unlikely to fall foul of the ITC as the group's initial licence application mentioned that interactivity may in due course be provided.

Byatt questions regulation plans

Chris Godsmark

Ian Byatt, the water industry regulator, set himself on a collision course with the Government yesterday over Labour's long-term plans to shake up utility regulation. He also said his next price review could not be conducted independently of the windfall tax on the privatised utilities, to be introduced in the next Budget.

Speaking after the Water Summit in London, which brought together water company chiefs and environmentalists to hear a 10-point plan on leakage and resource management, Mr Byatt questioned whether Labour's plans to cream off any excess profits from privatised utilities each year could be made to work.

The final proposals for utility price regulation outlined before the election envisaged retaining the so-called RPI-X formula based on inflation, but sharing excess profits between customers and shareholders.

"My approach has been a flexible response within certain principles. I'm quite doubtful

about whether a rule could be made to work. The present system works quite well," he said.

Questioning how quickly what he described as "formulaic rules" could be implemented retrospectively each year, Mr Byatt said he preferred his own voluntary system for companies which failed to meet investment targets implied in their price controls.

Several water companies were this year asked by Ofwat

the water watchdog, not to raise prices by as much as allowed in their price regimes from last month. Most, including Severn Trent, North West Water and Yorkshire Water, agreed to comply although Thames Water refused to accept the voluntary arrangement.

Since privatisation the 10 water and sewerage groups have been allowed to raise bills to cover the massive investment backlog, but have frequently been

attacked for failing to spend enough.

Mr Byatt also said his next price review, brought forward from 2000 to 1999, could not be carried out in isolation from the windfall tax, which he said was one of several issues which needed consideration. "They've said they want to consider profit sharing. In the meantime Gordon Brown wants to have a windfall tax. There are a lot of big issues to talk through," he explained, emphasising his statutory duty to ensure water companies were properly financed.

Mr Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, has pledged to consult industry regulators before levying the tax. However Mr Byatt said he had received no request from the Treasury, despite the possibility of a June Budget.

Mr Byatt is not the first regulator to question Labour's utility proposals. Clare Spottiswoode, the gas regulator, has criticised the principle of the windfall tax, arguing her latest price proposals for British Gas were designed to wipe out any excess profits from the past.



At the summit: The regulator, Ian Byatt (left), and Michael Meacher, Environment Minister

Glaxo profits hit
by strong pound

Sameena Ahmad

Glaxo Wellcome said yesterday the strength of the pound could cut as much as 5 per cent off the pharmaceutical giant's profits this year. Although Glaxo's sales rose 10 per cent in the first 10 months of the year at constant exchange rates, they were unchanged when converted to sterling.

In his final address as chairman to the annual general meeting, Sir Colin Corness said: "If exchange rates were to remain at their present level for the rest of 1997, the adverse impact on earnings for the whole year would be around 5 per cent."

However analysts were unfazed, saying the impact of sterling was anticipated and they were not changing their forecasts. Followers also were pleasantly surprised that Glaxo's sales growth, excluding ulcer blockbuster Zantac, which comes off patent this July, was 15 per cent in constant currency. They said

Zantac's sales also fell less fast than anticipated over the period, declining by 7 per cent. One analyst said: "Fifteen per cent underlying sales growth is first class. That puts Glaxo in the same league as players like Merck, Pfizer and SmithKline."

However in a depressed market, the group's share price fell 2.5 per cent to £12.51.

Also at the meeting, Sir Richard Sykes, deputy chairman and chief executive, confirmed to animal rights activists that the group was no longer awarding business to the Huntingdon Life Sciences drug testing group.

This followed a damning undercover television programme showing some of Huntingdon's employees mistreating dogs.

Sir Richard said: "There is no place for this behaviour in biomedical research. After the programme we decided not to place further contracts with the company. We await a Home Office report before we decide whether to continue business."

New Interflora
board refuses
to budge

Chris Godsmark

The new directors running Interflora will tell the organisation's 2,600 members today that they are staying in the job after receiving positive legal advice from a barrister.

As turmoil continued to grip the UK's largest flower delivery organisation yesterday it also emerged that the new Interflora board has suspended the former company secretary and decided to close a wholesale flower subsidiary.

A sweeping review of the business, instigated after the vote 10 days ago to throw out the previous 11-strong board, has also uncovered advanced plans to change Interflora's status from a mutually owned organisation to a fully fledged company.

The barrister's opinion, delivered to the new board's solicitor yesterday, is understood to confirm that the replacement directors do not have to comply with requests for a postal ballot of the entire membership.

A petition of more than 400 florists sympathetic to the old board was delivered to Interflora's offices last Friday, asking for a postal vote on the reinstatement of the directors.

In a further twist, the petition did not call at the same time for the removal of the six new directors. A source close to the replacement board said the petition would therefore mean combining the two boards.

Such a move was prohibited by Interflora's articles of association, which provide for no more than 11 directors at any one time.

Advice from the barrister was very positive. Under the

articles they cannot have another 11 directors. They're asking for something they cannot have," said the source.

The original meeting at Warwick University saw some 1,000 members narrowly vote to dismiss the old board, led by chairman David Parry, who then called for a full postal ballot. Mr Parry said he will consider taking legal advice of his own if the new board, led by Bristol florist Geoff Hughes, refuses to comply.

While the legal argument raged, the new board announced the closure of Interflora Flowers, a wholesale delivery offshoot set up three years ago to sell flowers to individual member florists. Eight jobs will go in the process.

Interflora said the business had been consistently in the red, losing £12,000 in January alone.

Separately it also emerged that Brian Ward, the former company secretary, had been suspended from his full-time job at Interflora last Friday after disagreements with the new board. Mr Ward had resigned as company secretary after the Warwick vote, but remained a staff member.

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low
FTSE 100	4645.20	-48.70	-1.0	4693.90	4056.60
FTSE 250	4910.40	-15.30	-0.3	4779.30	3469.40
FTSE 350	2251.50	-20.60	-0.9	2272.10	2017.90
FTSE SmallCap	2311.45	-5.34	-0.2	2374.20	2178.22
FTSE All-Share	2211.91	-19.07	-0.9	2230.98	1989.73
New York	7205.80	+11.13	+0.2	7333.95	5032.94
Tokyo	20489.75	+185.02	+0.9	20489.75	17303.85
Hong Kong	14108.82	+46.45	+0.3	14153.58	12055.17
Frankfurt	closed			3604.55	2848.77

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	Long bond
UK	6.16	6.87	7.09	7.89	7.15
US	5.66	6.22	6.99	5.41	6.90
Japan	0.43	0.72	2.46	2.31	6.85
Germany	3.12	2.91		6.41	6.50

CURRENCIES					
Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
£/US\$	1.6405	+0.0006	1.5157	£/Yen	0.0096
£/DM	1.6385	+0.015	1.5135	£/Yen	0.0109
DM/US\$	2.7888	+0.010	2.3132	DM/US\$	1.7008
¥/US\$	194.112	-0.0084	161.887	¥/US\$	119.325
£/A\$	99.3	+0.5	84.4	£/A\$	103.1

كشفا من الاموال



COMMENT

Tax and benefit is a big, big subject. Whole libraries have been written on it, many hundreds of people have devoted their lives to researching it. But no government has ever managed to get to grips with it.

Maybe a businessman can solve this problem

Appointing businessmen to head up the various task forces Labour is setting up on the big, burning issues of our time must seem like a bit of a betrayal to those still hankering after the ways of old Labour. Gone are beer, sandwiches and overalls. In comes chardonnay, canapes and lounge suits (preferably Armani or alternative designer label). But it is also a clever move, not just because it helps bind big business into the new administration, but because it might, just might, help the Government find solutions as well.

Take tax and benefit, where Martin Taylor, chief executive of Barclays Bank, was yesterday appointed to head up the inter-departmental task force. This is a big, big subject. Whole libraries have been written on it, many hundreds of people have devoted their lives to researching it. But no government has ever managed to get to grips with it.

The political will has certainly been there, perhaps more so under the old government than the new, but somehow nothing ever gets done outside a little ineffective tinkering. The issues seem too complex, too intractable for any government to steer its way through.

Why should a businessman or banker be any better at it than all those civil servants and politicians who have already tried and failed? There are plenty of reasons for believing they may actually be worse. Businessmen can operate in a very cocooned environment and quite often know little about the world outside the markets in which they operate. What they know about man-

agement and knocking heads together, moreover, is generally learnt within the hire and fire, faintly military environment of a big organisation. Public life, with Parliament and an electorate to answer to, is an entirely different ball game.

Nonetheless, applying the businessman's single-minded approach to the problem might help. It is not, after all, Mr Taylor's brief to decide on policy. His is the more technical one of bringing rational analysis to the problem, helping to devise a range of different solutions from which ministers can choose. Furthermore, he comes at the issue like a company doctor, unimpaired and uninfluenced by the past and all its baggage. As every businessman knows, there are always hundreds of reasons, most of them very good ones, why something cannot be done. Mr Taylor's task will be to help find ways of overcoming them, which is not so very different, when you think about it, to what he does already.

Brown's audit could be more than a gimmick

What a splendid picture of economic health yesterday's figures for government borrowing present. Strong growth is boosting tax revenues above the cautious Treasury forecasts. Its target for the year looks like being far too pessimistic. If the previous lot were still in power, they would be crowing about it, with some justification.

But before concluding that everything is hunky-dory with the public finances, we should remember that the outlook for the PSBR also depends on continuing to meet tough spending plans. Though not impossible, the catch with these plans is that they imply a progressively tighter squeeze on public services for which demand grows over time, especially health and education.

The Government has promised to address this problem by setting clear priorities in spending. "Bad" spending on unemployment and other benefits will make way for more "good" spending on health and education. That's the idea, anyway. Gordon Brown's plan for an audit of the government's books and his promise of tough new rules in tonight's speech to the CBI to police spending have to be seen in this context. In one sense, it is just a gimmick. There is already plenty of information about the public finances and we do not need an independent audit to make a reasonable assessment of the underlying position.

However, such an audit, if repeated on a regular basis, might come to serve a second, as yet unthought of purpose - restoring taxpayers' trust in what the government is doing with our money. The reason there is a long-term, structural hole in the budget is that we have become increasingly unwilling to fund greater expenditure. Fiscal policy has been cynically linked to the electoral cycle, while the long-term failures of welfare spending have become all too clear. Tax cuts came to seem a political necessity, while the spend-

ing juggernaut rolled on for too long. Tax and spending have become uncoupled.

One way of looking at Gordon Brown's move, therefore, is as a necessary prelude to any future attempt to increase spending. Just as the Bank of England's independence will build credibility in monetary policy by putting it at one remove from political influence, an audit of the public finances might help restore credibility in fiscal policy.

Boeing merger is none of Europe's business

The dispute between Europe and the US over the proposed Boeing/McDonnell Douglas merger has been simmering along barely noticed since the deal was announced last December but it is coming to the boil now that Karel Van Miert, the EU Commissioner for Competition, is preparing to send his statement of objections winging across the Atlantic.

What, you might wonder, has a merger between two US aircraft makers that will actually leave them with a smaller market share than Boeing had on its own 10 years ago got to do with Brussels?

The answer is that Mr Van Miert's writ runs wide. He has analysed the figures and concluded that the deal clearly falls foul of European merger regulations.

At this point it is necessary to recall a little history. The manufacture of large commer-

cial aircraft has been a running sore between the US and Europe for as long as anyone cares to remember. Certainly, in any event, since Airbus Industrie, Europe's answer to US hegemony in this area, began to win orders in Boeing's backyard.

Now that Airbus is limbering up to become a fully commercial entity - with the result that it may start to achieve Boeing-style economies of scale and manufacturing efficiencies - Mr Van Miert smells another plot by the US to reassert global domination in the shape of the exclusive long-term supply deals Boeing is stitching up with its airline customers. The reality, however, is that the carriers Boeing has so far signed up were never big customers of Airbus anyway. Those that are - and indeed those that are not, such as British Airways - will always put healthy competition between two suppliers ahead of sweetheart deals with just one.

Mr Van Miert ignores this point. He also ignores the wider ramifications for EU-US trade as his comments become more bellicose. How can Europe lobby effectively against such pieces of international trade vandalism as the Helms-Burton Act when Mr Van Miert is playing into the hands of those US senators who spot political motivation. The anti-trust issues raised by the Boeing-McDonnell merger, such as they are, should be left to US regulators alone. Beyond their shores the markets can be relied on to regulate Boeing's behaviour far more effectively than Mr Van Miert.

Warning on sterling hits BA shares

Michael Harrison

British Airways shares fell sharply yesterday as the airline warned that the strength of sterling could knock more than £100m off its profits this year.

The warning, combined with signs of mounting industrial unrest among BA staff and a lack of any firm news on its transatlantic alliance with American Airlines, took the gloss off another record performance last year as pre-tax profits reached a new peak of £640m.

Sir Colin Marshall, BA's chairman, said it was a source of frustration that the tie-up with American was still awaiting approval from Whitehall, Washington and Brussels almost a year after it was first unveiled.

Both Sir Colin and BA's chief executive, Bob Ayling, contrasted the delays with the way Lufthansa and United were forging ahead with their Star alliance and said that it was essential for the partnership with American to be approved so the two airlines could compete on an equal basis.

However, Mr Ayling gave little indication that BA was close to getting the green light from the new President of the Board of Trade, Margaret Beckett, saying merely that BA was "picking up the threads" with the

new Government in the expectation that a decision would be reached with all due despatch.

Last year's 9 per cent climb in profits was struck after BA took an exceptional charge of £127m to cover redundancies resulting from its business efficiency programme under which BA has so far identified savings of £600m out of the target of £1bn. At the same time it wrote £125m back into the profit and loss account after revaluing its stake in US-Air at its original cost.

The sale of the 24.6 per cent shareholding is expected to raise around \$500m (£305m) against the \$400m BA originally invested. At the operating level profits fell by £55m from £728m in 1995-96 to £673m last year. The reduction was largely due to a steep rise in fuel prices this year which cost BA £142m.

In the current year, the biggest drag factor on BA is likely to be the strength of sterling. Derek Stevens, BA's finance director, said that currency losses could run into three figures.

Mr Ayling all but ruled out following the lead of American and Delta in the US and signing an exclusive supply deal with Boeing to purchase all its aircraft on a long term basis - the source of trade friction between Europe and the US.

Investment column, page 22



Frustrated: Sir Colin Marshall is still waiting for word from Whitehall, Washington and Brussels. Photograph: Adrian Dennis

Strike threat grows despite £1,100 bonuses

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

British Airways faces growing industrial unrest despite an announcement yesterday that its 58,000 workers were to receive a bonus worth at least £1,100 for UK employees.

As union leaders prepared for a strike ballot of 8,500 cabin crew over the imposition of new pay and conditions, it emerged that a further 8,000

ground staff were heading for a vote on industrial action over the planned sell-off of the airline's catering division.

Management were also accused of provoking employees by staging a "midnight raid" on union offices on BA premises at Heathrow and Gatwick last Friday in which they allegedly stole T&G documents before changing the locks on doors.

Bill Morris, general secretary of the union, accused the com-

pany of behaving like "a 19th mill owner" and he demanded the return of the missing papers.

Amid signs of anger among sections of the workforce, the airline announced a £94m payout to employees made up of an £89m share of the profits and 10 free BA shares each.

The bonus marked the tenth anniversary of the privatisation of the national carrier, which yesterday revealed record pre-tax profits of £640m.

The extra benefits are the equivalent of 3.3 weeks' basic pay - somewhat lower than last year's award which amounted to 3.9 weeks' wages.

Its decision to hand over 10 free shares was made because of the "efforts of employees in a particularly demanding year". Some union representatives, however, characterised the bonus as useful strike pay and said that it amounted to a simple bribe.

Guinness and GrandMet 'will have to sell brands'

Competition lawyers warned yesterday that the £24bn merger between Guinness and Grand Metropolitan was highly unlikely to be approved by regulators unless the two companies agreed to significant divestments.

They believe the enlarged group, GMG Brands, will be forced to sell leading brands in certain markets, particularly in the US. They dismissed the Guinness and GrandMet view that no disposals would be necessary as mere "bravado".

"Most companies go into a merger expressing confidence because if they say they are prepared to make divestments then the authorities will probably ask them to make even more," said

David Aitman, head of competition law at Denton Hall. "I think they will probably get it through but not without pain."

Competition lawyers have identified two main obstacles that could disrupt the merger. The first is how the competition authorities choose to define the markets in which Guinness and GrandMet compete. The second issue is the combined advertising spend of the two companies, which could act as a barrier to entry to rivals.

On market definition, Guinness and GrandMet have been keen to use the broadest possible measures to make their combined share appear relatively small. They say they have less than 5 per cent of the global spirits market. On a slightly broader definition, which strips out locally produced "hooch", they claim 10 per cent of the "accessible" spirits market.

However, precedents suggest that the European Commission could judge the merger on GMG Brands' share of particular spirits sectors in specific member states.

For example, in the £4.4bn merger of Kimberley-Clark and Scott Paper in 1995, the EC made it a condition of approval that the enlarged company sold certain brands because its share of the toilet tissue, kitchen towels and handkerchief markets would have ranged from 50 to 75 per cent.

GMG Brands would have more than 50 per cent of the UK Scotch market and huge market shares in other spirits sectors in Spain and Belgium.

"I would have thought there was a strong possibility that they [the EC] would look at the merger on a member state basis," said Mr Aitman.

Simon Polito, EC and competition partner at Lowell White Durrant, feels divestments might have to be made in the US, where GMG Brands will have around 75 per cent of the

standard Scotch market with brands such as Dewar's, Johnnie Walker and J&B Rare. He said the US authorities such as the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Justice adopt a stricter analysis of market share concentrations than the EC.

The Guinness argument that Scotch, gin and vodka are not separate markets but all part of a broader spirits market in which the companies compete, is also discounted by lawyers. They point to precedents such as the £1.6bn Nestle-Perrier merger in 1992. In that case the two companies argued that they were competing not just in the

mineral water market but in the broader arena of soft drinks. The EC rejected the plea.

Asked yesterday whether these cases did not bode ill for GMG Brands, Tony Greener, chairman of Guinness said, "We obviously don't think so or we wouldn't be doing what we are doing."

However he declined to discuss individual markets. He also denied that the combined advertising spend of the two companies might represent a problem. Last year Guinness spent £597m on advertising and marketing, of which £332m was in the United Distillers spirits division. GrandMet spent a total of £1.2bn of which £427m was on its IDV spirits brands.

IN BRIEF

Greenalls to create 2,000 jobs

Greenalls, the UK's highest independent pub group, expects to create more than 2,000 jobs with a £375m capital expenditure programme over the next two years. The group, which in March announced a shake-up of its managed pub operation to save £3.5m a year, said it expected to lift the number of its branded and concept outlets from around 360 to 500 by March 1999 under trading names such as Millers Kitchen, Henry's Table and Quincey's. Around two-thirds of the jobs will be part-time. Disposals this year are expected to raise around £60m, including 100 tenanted pubs and four hotels from the De Vere chain. The group reported underlying pre-tax profits up 12 per cent to £63.9m in the six months to March and is raising the interim dividend 7.7 per cent to 6.7p. Investment column, page 22

Stock Exchange tightens AIM regulations

The London Stock Exchange is implementing several changes to the rules governing admission to the Alternative Investment Market. Companies will now be required to disclose the name of anyone who has received fees or shares worth £10,000 or more in the 12 months prior to joining AIM. In addition, companies must undertake regular reviews of their actual financial performance compared with projections made in the AIM admission documents, with immediate notification of any material change in trading performance. The Exchange also said there would be greater emphasis on the specific responsibility of nominated advisers to satisfy themselves that a company was appropriate for admission to AIM.

Hitachi Credit to float in London

Hitachi Credit (UK) will be valued at up to £50m when it becomes the first Japanese company to float in London. The placing, due to take place in the summer, will raise between £15m and £20m for the credit finance company, part of the giant Japanese Hitachi conglomerate. Established in 1982, HCUK provides finance for plant and equipment, retail credit, contract hire and fleet management services and insurance. Pre-tax profits rose 34 per cent to £3.7m in the year to March.

US companies search for space in City

A survey of 10 US financial groups shows they are searching for a total of 1.4 million square feet of office space in the City of London, representing a possible 10,000 new jobs. Chesterton has surveyed institutions including Goldman Sachs, Andersen Consulting and Merrill Lynch and found that the Americans have aggressive expansion plans for the Square Mile. Goldman and Merrill both need 300,000 square feet while Credit Suisse First Boston and Andersen Consulting are looking for around 150,000 square feet and JP Morgan is looking for 100,000 square feet.

Visual Action buys MES for £23m

Visual Action Holdings is buying MES, the exhibition services provider, for a maximum of £23.1m. In addition, Visual Action is selling the film services division to Panavision for £37.5m. "The acquisition of MES extends the range of services we provide to the corporate meetings industry. Taken together the acquisition and disposal increase the focus of our operations and enhance the group's growth prospects," said Bob Ellis, chief executive of Visual Action. "We plan to invest the remaining disposal proceeds in developing our activities in the corporate meetings and broadcast video markets both organically and by further acquisitions."

Catties sells stake in Rosebys

Catties, the consumer finance group, has sold its remaining 23 per cent stake in Rosebys, the retailers of household textiles, for £23.1m, equal to 75p a share. The sale realises a profit of £15.7m before tax and expenses, and completes the disposal of non-core businesses begun in 1992. The sale had timed to take advantage of a rare opportunity when it had been possible for a major stakeholder to sell. Eddie Cran, chief executive, said, "The consumer finance sector has fallen 5 per cent following reports of Government plans to curb high credit charges. However, the City believes any action to curb penalty charges levied by non-status lenders such as City Mortgage Corporation should not apply to home credit companies such as Catties and the market leader, Provident Financial. Rosebys fell 2.5p to 297.5p and Catties 3.5p to 311p. Investment column, page 22

BUDGETED

...BECAUSE WITH DIRECT DEBIT BILLS CAN BE SPREAD AND IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT OF AN ERROR YOUR BANK GUARANTEES TO REFUND YOUR MONEY IMMEDIATELY.

UK BANKS AND BUILDING SOCIETIES

DIRECT Debit

DD YOUR DOUGH

business

Goldsborough begins homes sale

Sameena Ahmad

Goldsborough Healthcare, the nursing home group which last summer fought off a £77m bid from the UK's second-largest operator, Westminster Healthcare, is selling half its nursing home portfolio. A leak of the news, which forced Goldsborough to issue a statement to the Stock Exchange late yesterday, came on the same day as a US group confirmed it was buying the UK nursing home operator Quality Care Homes for £46.3m cash.

Both deals are evidence of rapid restructuring and consolidation in a sector plagued by profit warnings and depressed share prices, analysts claim.

The bid for Quality Care by US investment group Principal Healthcare leaves just seven nursing home players quoted on the UK stock market compared to 13 less than a year ago.

Part disposal of nursing home portfolio and cash bid for Quality Care herald consolidation of the sector

Andrew Richmond, a health-care analyst from Collins Stewart, said: "I have been saying since 1995 that we'll see takeovers emerging in this industry."

Pat Carter, chief executive of Westminster Healthcare, said he thought there would be just a handful of major players left in the market in a few years.

The trouble with nursing homes, said analysts, was that too many companies tried to build too many homes in the 1980s, driven by exciting projections of growth in the number of elderly people needing professional care. At the time there was plenty of government money to pay for care, which led to explosive growth in the number of nursing homes. However the honeymoon

ended when local authorities were given control of nursing home funding in the early 1990s. Cash for admissions dried up and the number of occupied nursing home beds fell. With high fixed costs, the operators' profits came under pressure and share prices fell.

The difficulty of the sector was one reason that Goldsborough was exiting from nursing homes, said observers. The company has gradually reduced its dependence on homes, now around half of total profits compared 77 per cent at flotation in 1994, favouring instead its more predictable fibre care and hospital businesses.

"They had taken the nursing home side as far as they could," said one top industry boss.

"They needed the cash to do something else."

Goldsborough, which owns around 31 nursing homes, said it was in early talks to sell some homes. However it is thought to be selling five in London and eight in the Midlands, through estate agents and direct sales.

Observers are likely to be from the private sector. Goldsborough is thought to want to use the cash to buy private homes and hospitals. Allied Medical, which owns 65 outlets, though the group says it expects to sell its portfolio for asset value. Observers worry that Westminster, now known as a strong position to offer a lower price.

Meanwhile US operators at-

tracted by the low valuations in the sector and maturity of their own market have been moving into the UK. Sun Healthcare has snapped up two quoted UK players, Apta and Ashbourne, in the past 12 months.

Observers see the move by Principal as the next stage. Principal will own Quality Care's 2,256 beds, but will not operate them, leasing most of them out to quoted UK estates.

Chai Patel, chief executive of the UK's biggest listed private care firm, said: "There is a clear separation between the owners and operators of nursing homes in the USA, but not here. These deals allow operators to expand the number of homes they have without resorting to the City or banks. I think there will be much more of this kind of financing in the future."

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN
EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

Record profits but BA hits pockets of turbulence

British Airways discovered long ago that it takes more than another set of record profits to make its shares fly and yesterday was no exception. The market chose to disregard the 9 per cent climb in pre-tax profits last year to £640m, preferring to concentrate instead on the pockets of turbulence that BA is encountering.

First, however, the good news. The rise in fuel prices, which sliced £142m off profits last year, has gone into reverse allowing BA to factor in a gain of some £60m for the current year. Second, the economic outlook is good in most of BA's main markets, notably the US and UK, suggesting that it should be able to maintain, if not improve, on passenger yields. Third, the business efficiency programme is reaping returns at least in line with the airline's expectations. The measures announced so far will deliver £600m of the £1bn of savings BA is aiming to achieve by the turn of the century.

Now for the less good tidings. There is still no positive news on regulatory approval for the grand transatlantic alliance with American Airlines, while the strength of sterling could trim more than £100m from profits this year and industrial unrest is building up. Unions are now threatening to follow up the current ballot of cabin crew with another among catering staff.

Of these, the absence of any regulatory green light for the AA alliance is the most frustrating. It is now approaching a year since the partnership was first announced and the two airlines are still awaiting clearance in Whitehall, Brussels and Washington. Contrast that with the rather extravagant way that Lufthansa, United and their partner airlines chose to launch their grandiose Star alliance in Frankfurt last week. The betting remains that BA will get the necessary clearances. But the question is at what price, particularly with Margaret Beckett and her new team of ministers and special advisers around at the Department of Trade and Industry demonstrating little enthusiasm for the concept of national champions.

The souring of industrial relations is a more ominous portent for BA, since the success of its cost-efficiency drive

hinges on its 58,000 workforce (up, incidentally, by 3,000 in a year) continuing to accept wage freezes and staff reductions along with the relocation or outsourcing of their jobs.

Bob Ayling, BA's chief executive, says there is no appetite for industrial action but until there is some positive news on the AA alliance, there may not be much investor appetite for BA either.

The shares, down 24p to 736p after a strong run, are hardly on an astronomical rating. Profits this year of £720m would put them on a forward multiple of under 14. Still, investors should wait for the turbulence to pass.

Greenalls set to spend more

Greenalls, now the biggest independent pub owner since taking over Boddingtons in 1995, was making much of its accelerating capital expenditure programme yesterday. This is set to grow from £175m this year to £200m in 1998, which spells good news for the 2,000 or more extra employees being taken on as the group develops its theme bars, ranging from Millers Kitchen for the family to Henry's Table steakhouses.

But the City remains unimpressed: after underperforming the market by 28 per cent over the last six months, the shares fell another 3.5p to 490.5p yesterday.

There were gripes over the interim results, with pre-tax profits up from £27.1m to £57.8m in the six months to March seen as a mere disappointment. Hoare Govett trimmed its full-year forecast by £5m to £162m as a result.

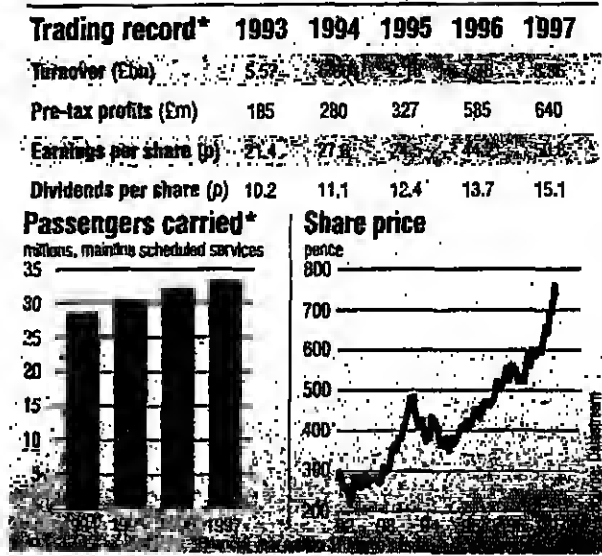
Even so, underlying operating profits up 14 per cent to £88.6m look comparable with highly regarded rivals Whitbread. Sales growth in the managed pubs and restaurants business ranging from 3.8 per cent in drinks to 20.5 per cent in slot machines looks at least as good and in some cases much better than Whitbread.

The plan is to take branded and "concept" bars from 360 to 500 over the next two years, while shifting 245 managed pubs to tenancies will maintain Greenalls' beer volumes. The group is the biggest customer of Bass, Carlsberg-Tetley and Whitbread, putting it in a strong position when contracts are renegotiated in September 1998.

The real problem is that, held back for at least a year by the takeover of Boddingtons, it is having to run to catch up with the likes of Whitbread, which has been investing heavily in its pubs for years. Gearing is still likely to be above 60 per cent next year, when the consumer boom may be looking a little mature. Greenalls was warning yesterday that trading in North-west England is currently difficult. Standing on a forward p/e of 13, the shares therefore look a hold.

British Airways: At a glance

Market value: £7.37bn, share price 736p



Cattles sell-off looks a sensible option

Cattles, the Yorkshire-based door-to-door credit group, will raise £23.1m from yesterday's sale of its remaining 23 per cent stake in Rosebys, the household textile retailer. In the short run that will reduce debt, although the group speaks expansively about significant opportunities in its core markets, with the prospect of the funds being reinvested over time.

Rosebys was one of the non-core businesses floated off in 1992, when it was valued at around £20m. Since then, the offspring has grown to a £120m company through successive acquisitions and rights issues, while Cattles' original post-flotation stake of 48 per cent has been diluted to the point where the next deal would take it below the 20 per cent level at which its profits can be equity accounted.

So despite being done at a near 8 per cent discount to the share price, down 2.5p to 297.5p, yesterday's deal looked sensible. In the latest year to December, the stake contributed

£2.02m to Cattles' total pre-tax profit of £33.9m and 1p to total earnings of 17p. The proceeds should reduce debt, which totalled £148m at the year end.

Shopcheck, the door-to-door collection division is still the largest chunk of Cattle's business, but rapid growth in Welcome, the conventional loan business, and the factoring and leasing divisions has diluted Shopcheck's contribution from 96 per cent of the total profits in 1994 to 65 per cent last year. Group profits grew 40 per cent in 1995 and another 20 per cent last year. Even assuming a half million dilution from the disposal, analysts still expect profits to grow to £37.7m this year, rising to £42.3m in 1998.

The sector has been adversely affected by rumours of a Government clamp-down on weekly collected credit, but the industry is confident it will escape any such moves. Down 2.5p to 311p, the shares look fairly rated on a forward multiple of 17, dropping to 15.

CWC spends £50m on move to Mercury office

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Cable & Wireless Communications, the recently merged cable group, has settled its accommodation problems with a provisional deal worth more than £50m to take over the central London headquarters built for the Mercury phones network.

It has also emerged that the Cable & Wireless parent group, which built New Mercury House for its UK telephone subsidiary in 1989, took a £70m provision in its annual results last week to cover losses on the value of the office block. Details of the write-off were disclosed to analysts by Robert Lerwill, C&W's finance director.

Cable & Wireless Communications (CWC) also yesterday announced the appointment of a chief operating officer to work alongside Graham Wallace, chief executive. He is Greg Clarke, chief executive of C&W's mobile operation.

The option to take over the Mercury building agreed by CWC brings the demise of the Mercury brand and corporate structure a step closer. The CWC merger, completed last month, saw Mercury combined with three cable operators, Nynex CableComms, Bell Cablemedia and Videotron.

Some 500 managers are expected to lose their jobs over the next few months as the four companies move into the Mercury headquarters and restructure their administrative operations. CWC plans to launch a single brand name using the Cable & Wireless corporate identity by autumn.

C&W entered into a complex financing arrangement when it leased the building to Mercury in 1990. The £70m provision reflects the difference between the value of some £120m in the original deal and the potential purchase price for CWC, understood to be more than £50m. Mr Lerwill said the provision

covered the drop in property rental values during the recession.

Nicholas Mearns Smith, CWC's finance director, confirmed the group had agreed an option to buy out the building with C&W. "It's a substantial building and it's in the middle of London. We need some prestige office space for a company which has many large UK businesses as its clients," he said.

The headquarters was a source of friction between Mercury and its C&W parent. New Mercury House, directly opposite C&W's offices, was planned at the peak of the 1980s boom by Stanhope Properties, the troubled developer bought by British Land two years ago.

The deal caused controversy inside Mercury because Lord Sharp, the late C&W chairman, was also on the board of Stanhope. Lord Sharp, who died in 1994, did not vote on the decision to go ahead with the building.

Float to value Royalblue at £40m

Christopher Sharples, the former head of the Securities & Futures Authority and his partner, David Taylor, will be worth £8m on paper when Royalblue the software company they set up in 1982 is floated on the Stock Exchange next month, writes Clifford German.

The two partners between them hold about 40 per cent of the company, the management a further 25 per cent, and venture capital backers Advent has 20 per cent and 3i has 15 per cent. The flotation is expected to value the company at around £40m.

The shareholders will each

sell around 20 per cent of their shares by way of a placing, and the group will raise £10m in new money. The company was originally Intercom data Systems before being renamed last year.

The float is intended to raise the company's profile, and finance future business ventures. Hoare Govett is the financial adviser, sponsor and broker to the company. The company's turnover has grown by 50 per cent and profits by 184 per cent compound over the last three years. Profits reached £2.02m in 1996, on turnover of £11.68m.

Royalblue employs about 160 staff, based in Woking with

offices in London and New York. It has 450 customers, the largest of which accounted for 8 per cent of revenues over the last three years. The company is a market leader in supplying software products and services to three distinct and fast-growing markets according to the chairman prospectus published yesterday.

Its products include fitness, a training support system for dealers in international markets, HelpDesk which produces software for IT help desks and customer support systems and Rostvini, a computer telephony integration system.

Company Results					
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend	
Maritime Audit Ship (p)	10.34m (8.17m)	3.29m (3.38m)	2.70p (2.95p)	1.25p (1p)	
BA (p)	- (-)	640m (585m)	15.05p (13.85p)	15.05p (13.85p)	
Greenalls (p)	557.7m (544.9m)	63.5m (57m)	16.84p (15.57p)	8.7p (8.22p)	
Greenalls Networks (p)	12.8m (11.92m)	358,000 (754,000)	0.07p (2.50p)	2.8p (2.0p)	
International Bank (p)	25.64m (20.27m)	4.21m (8.73m)	12.10p (12.58p)	8.5p (8.9p)	
Paladin Office (p)	- (-)	10m (8.2m)	11.4p (8.2p)	1.2p (1.1p)	
RW (p)	42.96m (45.18m)	1.68m (1.32m)	6.3p (5.0p)	2.3p (1.8p)	
SIN Industries (p)	18.25m (14.47m)	2.63m (2.35m)	15.0p (13.7p)	7.0p (6.0p)	

(p) - Final (f) - Interim (m) - New months

Space.

There's lots more of it in Emirates' new Business Class.

More room: up to 52" seat pitch on Airbus aircraft and one of the most luxurious seats in the sky on our Boeing 777s.
More comfort: supportive leg rest on all Business Class seats. More of the same: personal video, phone, fax and the finest champagne, wines and cuisine. Need we say more?

Just as well!

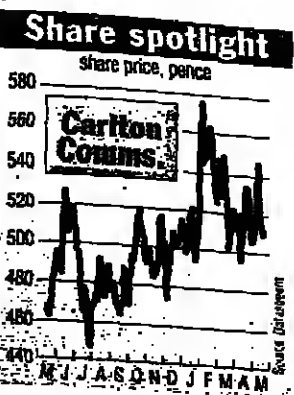


Emirates
THE FINEST IN THE SKY

OVER 100 INTERNATIONAL AWARDS, 41 INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS. FOR DETAILS CALL EMIRATES OR YOUR LOCAL TRAVEL AGENT. <http://www.ekgroup.com/>

هكذا من الامم

Data Bank	
FTSE 100	4645.2 -48.7
FTSE 250	4510.4 -15.3
FTSE 350	2251.5 -20.6
SEAQ VOLUME	633.6m shares, 49,821 bargains
Gifts Index	96.60 -0.28



Traders stay calm as Footsie falls nearly 50 points

Taking Stock

Transatlantic interest rate worries gnawed away at equities, dragging Footsie 48.7 points lower.

It was, surprisingly, the biggest one-day decline since as long ago as April Fool's Day, when the stock market was again wrestling with US rates. Since then the market has been in rampant form, climbing more than 400 points.

After such a long bull run a downturn performance was inevitable. Could it signal the end of what many regard as the Blair upsurge or merely a hiccup in the rise to Footsie at 5,000 points?

Most observers were inclined to the view that blue chips, if not the supporting stocks, still had a great deal of life left in them. "It had to happen; an uneasy Monday pulls in some profit-takers," said one long-time market man.

Signs of a big programme trade with the emphasis on sell-

ing and a weak futures market also contributed to the unsettled atmosphere.

Some lumpy lines of stock were said to be on offer. Cadbury Schweppes weakened 11p to 532.5p on fears of a hovering line and Tesco, off 2p at 392p, was another where shares were on offer.

Waters took a gentle bath as John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister, read the riot act, demanding much more strenuous action over water waste and so on. Thames, said to be the worst leaker, fell 9p to 673p and Hyder dipped 16p to 837.5p.

Southern Electric, the last of the independent regional electricity companies, fell 17p to 409.5p. On Friday HSBC James Capel paid just under 420p a share for an 8 per cent stake. There is talk that the stock has not been enthusiastically received and Capel has an uncomfortably large slice of



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

the stake still on its books.

Footsie ended at 4,645.2; dividend payments stripped off 3.6 points. The supporting FTSE 250 index fell 15.3 to 4,510.4.

Carlton Communications, with year's figures tomorrow, retreated 17.5p to 507p with a cautious BZW media review doing much of the damage. Profits are expected to emerge at £161.5m against £143.3m.

Reckitt & Colman, for long regarded as the most likely Unilever victim, fell 18p to 89p on reports that the Anglo-Dutch food and soap giant was eyeing a US acquisition.

On the financial front,

Abbey National continued to display resilience. At one time down 15p, it rose to record a 5.5p gain before settling at 959.5p, off 1.5p.

Premier Farnell, the electronic components group, rose 12.5p to 484p on talk of analyst meetings, and vehicles group Beazley, riding high at 425p, up 8.5p, was another said to be planning the analytical route.

Harrisons & Crossfield, involved in chemicals and timber, gained 7p to 111p on break-up hopes. Lonrho's talks with South African Johannesburg Consolidated Investment the shares 5p to 140p.

Rosebery, the linen retailer,

lost 2.5p to 297.5p as Candles, the credit company, sold its remaining 22.9 per cent stake at 275p through Charterhouse Tilney. Eight institutions took the shares.

Manchester United lost 6p to 628p following the retirement of Eric Cantona, and Chelsea, despite its FA Cup triumph, fell 10p to 116p on worries that the late Matthew Harding's estate was about to be liquidated. A sale of 402,000 shares last week aroused fears that the stake will be dribbled on to the market.

Heart of Midlothian, the Scottish Premier club, kicked off with a 1.5p premium against the 140p placing.

MEPC was little changed at 497p as the rumoured £2.2bn bid from British Land, off 14p at 583.5p, failed to materialise.

Telewest, the cable television company, fell 2.5p to a 75p low on talk that a leading securities house was about to make

extremely negative comments. Cragg, the engineer, fell 6.5p to 249p; Charterhouse placed shares at 248p to raise £10m.

Silk Industries was the day's smartest performer, jumping 52 per cent to 103.5p. The silk fabrics group produced profits of £2.6m against £2.3m and made confident noises about future trading.

Utilitec, the gas and water services group, rebounded 8p to 73.5p and Allied Leisure, following director buying, rallied 3p to 34.5p.

Suggestions that Hambro Countrywide was the lurking bidder for estate agents John D Wood produced an 11p gain to 146p.

Countrywide Properties, interim figures today, moved ahead 4p to 100p. There are hopes that the Essex house-builder will double profits over another £2m. In its last full year Countrywide made £3.1m and said in March it was trading well.

London & Metropolitan, the struggling property group, jumped 1.75p to 7.25p as one stockbroker described it as "a shell in the making in the buoyant property sector". The company has agreed a restructuring with its main banker, Bank of Scotland. As part of the deal B&S reduced its stake to 12.2 per cent, selling shares to L&M's directors. If the restructuring goes as planned the group will be near debt free with a few properties. The shares are at their best for more than two years.

Internet Music Shop Holdings is hoping to raise £670,000, selling shares at 50p. It should arrive on Oxfex next month. The company grew out of the Booksbox, one of Oxfex's high flyers. IMS expects to break even in the first half of next year.

Alcoholic Beverages

Stock	Price	Chg	%
487 401	Adn Corp	100	0.0
487 401	Budweiser	100	0.0
487 401	Carlsberg	100	0.0
487 401	Heineken	100	0.0
487 401	Interbrew	100	0.0
487 401	Kaiser	100	0.0
487 401	Miller	100	0.0
487 401	Orkla	100	0.0
487 401	Pilse	100	0.0
487 401	San Miguel	100	0.0
487 401	Tenneco	100	0.0
487 401	Wolfsberg	100	0.0

Banks, Merchant

Stock	Price	Chg	%
487 401	Barclays	100	0.0
487 401	HSBC	100	0.0
487 401	London	100	0.0
487 401	Midland	100	0.0
487 401	Natwest	100	0.0
487 401	Paragon	100	0.0
487 401	Prudential	100	0.0
487 401	Royal Bank	100	0.0
487 401	Santander	100	0.0
487 401	TSB	100	0.0
487 401	Windsor	100	0.0

Banks, Retail

Stock	Price	Chg	%
487 401	ABN Amro	100	0.0
487 401	Alm Invest	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of America	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of China	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of India	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of Japan	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of Korea	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of London	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of Montreal	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of New York	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of Paris	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of Spain	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of Sweden	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of Switzerland	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of Taiwan	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of Thailand	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of Vietnam	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of Yugoslavia	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of Zaire	100	0.0
487 401	Bank of Zimbabwe	100	0.0

Breweries, Pubs & Rest

Stock	Price	Chg	%
487 401	Adn Corp	100	0.0
487 401	Budweiser	100	0.0
487 401	Carlsberg	100	0.0
487 401	Heineken	100	0.0
487 401	Interbrew	100	0.0
487 401	Kaiser	100	0.0
487 401	Miller	100	0.0
487 401	Orkla	100	0.0
487 401	Pilse	100	0.0
487 401	San Miguel	100	0.0
487 401	Tenneco	100	0.0
487 401	Wolfsberg	100	0.0

Building/Construction

Stock	Price	Chg	%
487 401	Adn Corp	100	0.0
487 401	Budweiser	100	0.0
487 401	Carlsberg	100	0.0
487 401	Heineken	100	0.0
487 401	Interbrew	100	0.0
487 401	Kaiser	100	0.0
487 401	Miller	100	0.0
487 401	Orkla	100	0.0
487 401	Pilse	100	0.0
487 401	San Miguel	100	0.0
487 401	Tenneco	100	0.0
487 401	Wolfsberg	100	0.0

Building Materials

Stock	Price	Chg	%
487 401	Adn Corp	100	0.0
487 401	Budweiser	100	0.0
487 401	Carlsberg	100	0.0
487 401	Heineken	100	0.0
487 401	Interbrew	100	0.0
487 401	Kaiser	100	0.0
487 401	Miller	100	0.0
487 401	Orkla	100	0.0
487 401	Pilse	100	0.0
487 401	San Miguel	100	0.0
487 401	Tenneco	100	0.0
487 401	Wolfsberg	100	0.0

Chemicals

Stock	Price	Chg	%
487 401	Adn Corp	100	0.0
487 401	Budweiser	100	0.0
487 401	Carlsberg	100	0.0
487 401	Heineken	100	0.0
487 401	Interbrew	100	0.0
487 401	Kaiser	100	0.0
487 401	Miller	100	0.0
487 401	Orkla	100	0.0
487 401	Pilse	100	0.0
487 401	San Miguel	100	0.0
487 401	Tenneco	100	0.0
487 401	Wolfsberg	100	0.0

Electronics

Stock	Price	Chg	%
487 401	Adn Corp	100	0.0
487 401	Budweiser	100	0.0
487 401	Carlsberg	100	0.0
487 401	Heineken	100	0.0
487 401	Interbrew	100	0.0
487 401	Kaiser	100	0.0
487 401	Miller	100	0.0
487 401	Orkla	100	0.0
487 401	Pilse	100	0.0
487 401	San Miguel	100	0.0
487 401	Tenneco	100	0.0
487 401	Wolfsberg	100	0.0

Engineering

Stock	Price	Chg	%
487 401	Adn Corp	100	0.0
487 401	Budweiser	100	0.0
487 401	Carlsberg	100	0.0
487 401	Heineken	100	0.0
487 401	Interbrew	100	0.0
487 401	Kaiser	100	0.0
487 401	Miller	100	0.0
487 401	Orkla	100	0.0
487 401	Pilse	100	0.0
487 401	San Miguel	100	0.0
487 401	Tenneco	100	0.0
487 401	Wolfsberg	100	0.0

Food Manufacturers

Stock	Price	Chg	%
487 401	Adn Corp	100	0.0
487 401	Budweiser	100	0.0
487 401	Carlsberg	100	0.0
487 401	Heineken	100	0.0
487 401	Interbrew	100	0.0
487 401	Kaiser	100	0.0
487 401	Miller	100	0.0
487 401	Orkla	100	0.0
487 401	Pilse	100	0.0
487 401	San Miguel	100	0.0
487 401	Tenneco	100	0.0
487 401	Wolfsberg	100	0.0

Gas Distribution

Stock	Price	Chg	%
487 401	Adn Corp	100	0.0
487 401	Budweiser	100	0.0
487 401	Carlsberg	100	0.0
487 401	Heineken	100	0.0
487 401	Interbrew	100	0.0
487 401	Kaiser	100	0.0
487 401	Miller	100	0.0
487 401	Orkla	100	0.0
487 401	Pilse	100	0.0
487 401	San Miguel	100	0.0
487 401	Tenneco	100	0.0
487 401	Wolfsberg	100	0.0

Health Care

Stock	Price	Chg	%
487 401	Adn Corp	100	0.0
487 401	Budweiser	100	0.0
487 401	Carlsberg	100	0.0
487 401	Heineken	100	0.0
487 401	Interbrew	100	0.0
487 401	Kaiser	100	0.0
487 401	Miller	100	0.0
487 401	Orkla	100	0.0
487 401	Pilse	100	0.0
487 401	San Miguel	100	0.0
487 401	Tenneco	100	0.0
487 401	Wolfsberg	100	0.0

Index-linked

Stock	Price	Chg	%
487 401	Adn Corp	100	0.0
487 401	Budweiser	100	0.0
487 401	Carlsberg	100	0.0
487 401	Heineken	100	0.0
487 401	Interbrew	100	0.0
487 401	Kaiser	100	0.0
487 401	Miller	100	0.0
487 401	Orkla	100	0.0
487 401	Pilse	100	0.0
487 401	San Miguel	100	0.0
487 401	Tenneco	100	0.0
487 401	Wolfsberg	100	0.0

Updated

Stock	Price	Chg	%
487 401	Adn Corp	100	0.0
487 401	Budweiser	100	0.0
487 401	Carlsberg	100	0.0
487 401	Heineken	100	0.0
487 401	Interbrew	100	0.0
487 401	Kaiser	100	0.0
487 401	Miller	100	0.0
487 401	Orkla	100	0.0
487 401	Pilse	100	0.0
487 401	San Miguel	100	0.0
487 401	Tenneco	100	0.0
487 401	Wolfsberg	100	0.0

Household Goods

278	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279	Edi	279	-1	63	84	2430
279						

Woods wins after swing problem

Golf

Tiger Woods, in his first tournament since his spectacular triumph at the Masters, won the Byron Nelson Classic by two strokes in Irving, Texas on Sunday.

The 21-year-old struggled with his swing, but a two-under-par 68 was good enough to carry him to his fifth victory in 16 starts on the PGA Tour since he turned professional last August. "At the Masters I was hitting the ball pretty good. Today I wasn't," said Woods, who finished at 17-under 263, equalling the tournament record low score.

Fellow American Lee Ann Kinkor, who led by two strokes after seven holes, shot 68 to finish second on 265, while Tom Watson (67), winner of eight major titles, tied for third with Dan Forsman (70) on 267.

Woods, 21, collected \$324,000 (£202,000) for his third PGA Tour win this year, moved to the top of the money list with \$1,290,350 and jumped to the top of the American Ryder Cup rankings.

Rinkor, playing two groups

He also took his career earnings to \$2,080,944, passing the \$2m barrier quicker than anyone else.

But perhaps the most impressive thing about the win was that it was achieved with a fairly swing, which is the sign of a great player.

"I hit some really good shots and some really bad shots," Woods said. "I had to rely on my mind and my short game to get me through and that's what happened. I got up and down every time."

Woods was so concerned about his swing after the third round that he summoned his coach, Butch Harmon, who jumped into his car for the four-hour drive from Houston.

Harmon arrived early on Sunday morning, and spent time with his star pupil on the range before the final round. The session did not work miracles, but it was enough to carry Woods to victory.

He started the final round with a two-stroke lead, and made his lone bogey at the par-four third, where he sliced his drive into water.

Rinkor, playing two groups

ahead, birdied three of the first seven holes to open a two-stroke lead, but he could not hold it.

With a bogey at the 15th, he handed the lead back to Woods, who had five holes left, and it was as good as over.

Woods tees up again on Thursday at the Colonial tournament in nearby Fort Worth, where he also is expected to meet with Fuzzy Zoeller.

At the Masters, Zoeller made comments about Woods that were perceived by many to be racially insulting.

Britain's Nick Faldo, who had hit three sub-70 rounds, ended with a disappointing 73 for a 276 total.

BYRON NELSON CLASSIC TOURNAMENT (Irving, Texas) Leading final scores (15 holes, 18 holes, 21 holes, 36 holes, 54 holes, 72 holes, 90 holes, 108 holes, 126 holes, 144 holes, 162 holes, 180 holes, 210 holes, 240 holes, 270 holes, 300 holes, 330 holes, 360 holes, 390 holes, 420 holes, 450 holes, 480 holes, 510 holes, 540 holes, 570 holes, 600 holes, 630 holes, 660 holes, 690 holes, 720 holes, 750 holes, 780 holes, 810 holes, 840 holes, 870 holes, 900 holes, 930 holes, 960 holes, 990 holes, 1020 holes, 1050 holes, 1080 holes, 1110 holes, 1140 holes, 1170 holes, 1200 holes, 1230 holes, 1260 holes, 1290 holes, 1320 holes, 1350 holes, 1380 holes, 1410 holes, 1440 holes, 1470 holes, 1500 holes, 1530 holes, 1560 holes, 1590 holes, 1620 holes, 1650 holes, 1680 holes, 1710 holes, 1740 holes, 1770 holes, 1800 holes, 1830 holes, 1860 holes, 1890 holes, 1920 holes, 1950 holes, 1980 holes, 2010 holes, 2040 holes, 2070 holes, 2100 holes, 2130 holes, 2160 holes, 2190 holes, 2220 holes, 2250 holes, 2280 holes, 2310 holes, 2340 holes, 2370 holes, 2400 holes, 2430 holes, 2460 holes, 2490 holes, 2520 holes, 2550 holes, 2580 holes, 2610 holes, 2640 holes, 2670 holes, 2700 holes, 2730 holes, 2760 holes, 2790 holes, 2820 holes, 2850 holes, 2880 holes, 2910 holes, 2940 holes, 2970 holes, 3000 holes, 3030 holes, 3060 holes, 3090 holes, 3120 holes, 3150 holes, 3180 holes, 3210 holes, 3240 holes, 3270 holes, 3300 holes, 3330 holes, 3360 holes, 3390 holes, 3420 holes, 3450 holes, 3480 holes, 3510 holes, 3540 holes, 3570 holes, 3600 holes, 3630 holes, 3660 holes, 3690 holes, 3720 holes, 3750 holes, 3780 holes, 3810 holes, 3840 holes, 3870 holes, 3900 holes, 3930 holes, 3960 holes, 3990 holes, 4020 holes, 4050 holes, 4080 holes, 4110 holes, 4140 holes, 4170 holes, 4200 holes, 4230 holes, 4260 holes, 4290 holes, 4320 holes, 4350 holes, 4380 holes, 4410 holes, 4440 holes, 4470 holes, 4500 holes, 4530 holes, 4560 holes, 4590 holes, 4620 holes, 4650 holes, 4680 holes, 4710 holes, 4740 holes, 4770 holes, 4800 holes, 4830 holes, 4860 holes, 4890 holes, 4920 holes, 4950 holes, 4980 holes, 5010 holes, 5040 holes, 5070 holes, 5100 holes, 5130 holes, 5160 holes, 5190 holes, 5220 holes, 5250 holes, 5280 holes, 5310 holes, 5340 holes, 5370 holes, 5400 holes, 5430 holes, 5460 holes, 5490 holes, 5520 holes, 5550 holes, 5580 holes, 5610 holes, 5640 holes, 5670 holes, 5700 holes, 5730 holes, 5760 holes, 5790 holes, 5820 holes, 5850 holes, 5880 holes, 5910 holes, 5940 holes, 5970 holes, 6000 holes, 6030 holes, 6060 holes, 6090 holes, 6120 holes, 6150 holes, 6180 holes, 6210 holes, 6240 holes, 6270 holes, 6300 holes, 6330 holes, 6360 holes, 6390 holes, 6420 holes, 6450 holes, 6480 holes, 6510 holes, 6540 holes, 6570 holes, 6600 holes, 6630 holes, 6660 holes, 6690 holes, 6720 holes, 6750 holes, 6780 holes, 6810 holes, 6840 holes, 6870 holes, 6900 holes, 6930 holes, 6960 holes, 6990 holes, 7020 holes, 7050 holes, 7080 holes, 7110 holes, 7140 holes, 7170 holes, 7200 holes, 7230 holes, 7260 holes, 7290 holes, 7320 holes, 7350 holes, 7380 holes, 7410 holes, 7440 holes, 7470 holes, 7500 holes, 7530 holes, 7560 holes, 7590 holes, 7620 holes, 7650 holes, 7680 holes, 7710 holes, 7740 holes, 7770 holes, 7800 holes, 7830 holes, 7860 holes, 7890 holes, 7920 holes, 7950 holes, 7980 holes, 8010 holes, 8040 holes, 8070 holes, 8100 holes, 8130 holes, 8160 holes, 8190 holes, 8220 holes, 8250 holes, 8280 holes, 8310 holes, 8340 holes, 8370 holes, 8400 holes, 8430 holes, 8460 holes, 8490 holes, 8520 holes, 8550 holes, 8580 holes, 8610 holes, 8640 holes, 8670 holes, 8700 holes, 8730 holes, 8760 holes, 8790 holes, 8820 holes, 8850 holes, 8880 holes, 8910 holes, 8940 holes, 8970 holes, 9000 holes, 9030 holes, 9060 holes, 9090 holes, 9120 holes, 9150 holes, 9180 holes, 9210 holes, 9240 holes, 9270 holes, 9300 holes, 9330 holes, 9360 holes, 9390 holes, 9420 holes, 9450 holes, 9480 holes, 9510 holes, 9540 holes, 9570 holes, 9600 holes, 9630 holes, 9660 holes, 9690 holes, 9720 holes, 9750 holes, 9780 holes, 9810 holes, 9840 holes, 9870 holes, 9900 holes, 9930 holes, 9960 holes, 9990 holes, 10020 holes, 10050 holes, 10080 holes, 10110 holes, 10140 holes, 10170 holes, 10200 holes, 10230 holes, 10260 holes, 10290 holes, 10320 holes, 10350 holes, 10380 holes, 10410 holes, 10440 holes, 10470 holes, 10500 holes, 10530 holes, 10560 holes, 10590 holes, 10620 holes, 10650 holes, 10680 holes, 10710 holes, 10740 holes, 10770 holes, 10800 holes, 10830 holes, 10860 holes, 10890 holes, 10920 holes, 10950 holes, 10980 holes, 11010 holes, 11040 holes, 11070 holes, 11100 holes, 11130 holes, 11160 holes, 11190 holes, 11220 holes, 11250 holes, 11280 holes, 11310 holes, 11340 holes, 11370 holes, 11400 holes, 11430 holes, 11460 holes, 11490 holes, 11520 holes, 11550 holes, 11580 holes, 11610 holes, 11640 holes, 11670 holes, 11700 holes, 11730 holes, 11760 holes, 11790 holes, 11820 holes, 11850 holes, 11880 holes, 11910 holes, 11940 holes, 11970 holes, 12000 holes, 12030 holes, 12060 holes, 12090 holes, 12120 holes, 12150 holes, 12180 holes, 12210 holes, 12240 holes, 12270 holes, 12300 holes, 12330 holes, 12360 holes, 12390 holes, 12420 holes, 12450 holes, 12480 holes, 12510 holes, 12540 holes, 12570 holes, 12600 holes, 12630 holes, 12660 holes, 12690 holes, 12720 holes, 12750 holes, 12780 holes, 12810 holes, 12840 holes, 12870 holes, 12900 holes, 12930 holes, 12960 holes, 12990 holes, 13020 holes, 13050 holes, 13080 holes, 13110 holes, 13140 holes, 13170 holes, 13200 holes, 13230 holes, 13260 holes, 13290 holes, 13320 holes, 13350 holes, 13380 holes, 13410 holes, 13440 holes, 13470 holes, 13500 holes, 13530 holes, 13560 holes, 13590 holes, 13620 holes, 13650 holes, 13680 holes, 13710 holes, 13740 holes, 13770 holes, 13800 holes, 13830 holes, 13860 holes, 13890 holes, 13920 holes, 13950 holes, 13980 holes, 14010 holes, 14040 holes, 14070 holes, 14100 holes, 14130 holes, 14160 holes, 14190 holes, 14220 holes, 14250 holes, 14280 holes, 14310 holes, 14340 holes, 14370 holes, 14400 holes, 14430 holes, 14460 holes, 14490 holes, 14520 holes, 14550 holes, 14580 holes, 14610 holes, 14640 holes, 14670 holes, 14700 holes, 14730 holes, 14760 holes, 14790 holes, 14820 holes, 14850 holes, 14880 holes, 14910 holes, 14940 holes, 14970 holes, 15000 holes, 15030 holes, 15060 holes, 15090 holes, 15120 holes, 15150 holes, 15180 holes, 15210 holes, 15240 holes, 15270 holes, 15300 holes, 15330 holes, 15360 holes, 15390 holes, 15420 holes, 15450 holes, 15480 holes, 15510 holes, 15540 holes, 15570 holes, 15600 holes, 15630 holes, 15660 holes, 15690 holes, 15720 holes, 15750 holes, 15780 holes, 15810 holes, 15840 holes, 15870 holes, 15900 holes, 15930 holes, 15960 holes, 15990 holes, 16020 holes, 16050 holes, 16080 holes, 16110 holes, 16140 holes, 16170 holes, 16200 holes, 16230 holes, 16260 holes, 16290 holes, 16320 holes, 16350 holes, 16380 holes, 16410 holes, 16440 holes, 16470 holes, 16500 holes, 16530 holes, 16560 holes, 16590 holes, 16620 holes, 16650 holes, 16680 holes, 16710 holes, 16740 holes, 16770 holes, 16800 holes, 16830 holes, 16860 holes, 16890 holes, 16920 holes, 16950 holes, 16980 holes, 17010 holes, 17040 holes, 17070 holes, 17100 holes, 17130 holes, 17160 holes, 17190 holes, 17220 holes, 17250 holes, 17280 holes, 17310 holes, 17340 holes, 17370 holes, 17400 holes, 17430 holes, 17460 holes, 17490 holes, 17520 holes, 17550 holes, 17580 holes, 17610 holes, 17640 holes, 17670 holes, 17700 holes, 17730 holes, 17760 holes, 17790 holes, 17820 holes, 17850 holes, 17880 holes, 17910 holes, 17940 holes, 17970 holes, 18000 holes, 18030 holes, 18060 holes, 18090 holes, 18120 holes, 18150 holes, 18180 holes, 18210 holes, 18240 holes, 18270 holes, 18300 holes, 18330 holes, 18360 holes, 18390 holes, 18420 holes, 18450 holes, 18480 holes, 18510 holes, 18540 holes, 18570 holes, 18600 holes, 18630 holes, 18660 holes, 18690 holes, 18720 holes, 18750 holes, 18780 holes, 18810 holes, 18840 holes, 18870 holes, 18900 holes, 18930 holes, 18960 holes, 18990 holes, 19020 holes, 19050 holes, 19080 holes, 19110 holes, 19140 holes, 19170 holes, 19200 holes, 19230 holes, 19260 holes, 19290 holes, 19320 holes, 19350 holes, 19380 holes, 19410 holes, 19440 holes, 19470 holes, 19500 holes, 19530 holes, 19560 holes, 19590 holes, 19620 holes, 19650 holes, 19680 holes, 19710 holes, 19740 holes, 19770 holes, 19800 holes, 19830 holes, 19860 holes, 19890 holes, 19920 holes, 19950 holes, 19980 holes, 20010 holes, 20040 holes, 20070 holes, 20100 holes, 20130 holes, 20160 holes, 20190 holes, 20220 holes, 20250 holes, 20280 holes, 20310 holes, 20340 holes, 20370 holes, 20400 holes, 20430 holes, 20460 holes, 20490 holes, 20520 holes, 20550 holes, 20580 holes, 20610 holes, 20640 holes, 20670 holes, 20700 holes, 20730 holes, 20760 holes, 20790 holes, 20820 holes, 20850 holes, 20880 holes, 20910 holes, 20940 holes, 20970 holes, 21000 holes, 21030 holes, 21060 holes, 21090 holes, 21120 holes, 21150 holes, 21180 holes, 21210 holes, 21240 holes, 21270 holes, 21300 holes, 21330 holes, 21360 holes, 21390 holes, 21420 holes, 21450 holes, 21480 holes, 21510 holes, 21540 holes, 21570 holes, 21600 holes, 21630 holes, 21660 holes, 21690 holes, 21720 holes, 21750 holes, 21780 holes, 21810 holes, 21840 holes, 21870 holes, 21900 holes, 21930 holes, 21960 holes, 21990 holes, 22020 holes, 22050 holes, 22080 holes, 22110 holes, 22140 holes, 22170 holes, 22200 holes, 22230 holes, 22260 holes, 22290 holes, 22320 holes, 22350 holes, 22380 holes, 22410 holes, 22440 holes, 22470 holes, 22500 holes, 22530 holes, 22560 holes, 22590 holes, 22620 holes, 22650 holes, 22680 holes, 22710 holes, 22740 holes, 22770 holes, 22800 holes, 22830 holes, 22860 holes, 22890 holes, 22920 holes, 22950 holes, 22980 holes, 23010 holes, 23040 holes, 23070 holes, 23100 holes, 23130 holes, 23160 holes, 23190 holes, 23220 holes, 23250 holes, 23280 holes, 23310 holes, 23340 holes, 23370 holes, 23400 holes, 23430 holes, 23460 holes, 23490 holes, 23520 holes, 23550 holes, 23580 holes, 23610 holes, 23640 holes, 23670 holes, 23700 holes, 23730 holes, 23760 holes, 23790 holes, 23820 holes, 23850 holes, 23880 holes, 23910 holes, 23940 holes, 23970 holes, 24000 holes, 24030 holes, 24060 holes, 24090 holes, 24120 holes, 24150 holes, 24180 holes, 24210 holes, 24240 holes, 24270 holes, 24300 holes, 24330 holes, 24360 holes, 24390 holes, 24420 holes, 24450 holes, 24480 holes, 24510 holes, 24540 holes, 24570 holes, 24600 holes, 24630 holes, 24660 holes, 24690 holes, 24720 holes, 24750 holes, 24780 holes, 24810 holes, 24840 holes, 24870 holes, 24900 holes, 24930 holes, 24960 holes, 24990 holes, 25020 holes, 25050 holes, 25080 holes, 25110 holes, 25140 holes, 25170 holes, 25200 holes, 25230 holes, 25260 holes, 25290 holes, 25320 holes, 25350 holes, 25380 holes, 25410 holes, 25440 holes, 25470 holes, 25500 holes, 25530 holes, 25560 holes, 25590 holes, 25620 holes, 25650 holes, 25680 holes, 25710 holes, 25740 holes, 25770 holes, 25800 holes, 25830 holes, 25860 holes, 25890 holes, 25920 holes, 25950 holes, 25980 holes, 26010 holes, 26040 holes, 26070 holes, 26100 holes, 26130 holes, 26160 holes, 26190 holes, 26220 holes, 26250 holes, 26280 holes, 26310 holes, 26340 holes, 26370 holes, 26400 holes, 26430 holes, 26460 holes, 26490 holes, 26520 holes, 26550 holes, 26580 holes, 26610 holes, 26640 holes, 26670 holes, 26700 holes, 26730 holes, 26760 holes, 26790 holes, 26820 holes, 26850 holes, 26880 holes, 26910 holes, 26940 holes, 26970 holes, 27000 holes, 27030 holes, 27060 holes, 27090 holes, 27120 holes, 27150 holes, 27180 holes, 27210 holes, 27240 holes, 27270 holes, 27300 holes, 27330 holes, 27360 holes, 27390 holes, 27420 holes, 27450 holes, 27480 holes, 27510 holes, 27540 holes, 27570 holes, 27600 holes, 27630 holes, 27660 holes, 27690 holes, 27720 holes, 27750 holes, 27780 holes, 27810 holes, 27840 holes, 27870 holes, 27900 holes, 27930 holes, 27960 holes, 27990 holes, 28020 holes, 28050 holes, 28080 holes, 28110 holes, 28140 holes, 28170 holes, 28200 holes, 28230 holes, 28260 holes, 28290 holes, 28320 holes, 28350 holes, 28380 holes, 28410 holes, 28440 holes, 28470 holes, 28500 holes, 28530 holes, 28560 holes, 28590 holes, 28620 holes, 28650 holes, 28680 holes, 28710 holes, 28740 holes, 28770 holes, 28800 holes, 28830 holes, 28860 holes, 28890 holes, 28920 holes, 28950 holes, 28980 holes, 29010 holes, 29040 holes, 29070 holes, 29100 holes, 29130 holes, 29160 holes, 29190 holes, 29220 holes, 29250 holes, 29280 holes, 29310 holes, 29340 holes, 29370 holes, 29400 holes, 29430 holes, 29460 holes, 29490 holes, 29520 holes, 29550 holes, 29580 holes, 29610 holes, 29640 holes, 29670 holes, 29700 holes, 29730 holes, 29760 holes, 29790 holes, 29820 holes, 29850 holes, 29880 holes, 29910 holes, 29940 holes, 29970 holes, 30000 holes, 30030 holes, 30060 holes, 30090 holes, 30120 holes, 30150 holes, 30180 holes, 30210 holes, 30240 holes, 30270 holes, 30300 holes, 30330 holes, 30360 holes, 30390 holes, 30420 holes, 30450 holes, 30480 holes, 30510 holes, 30540 holes, 30570 holes, 30600 holes, 30630 holes, 30660 holes, 30690 holes, 30720 holes, 30750 holes, 30780 holes, 30810 holes, 30840 holes, 30870 holes, 30900 holes, 30930 holes, 30960 holes, 30990 holes, 31020 holes, 31050 holes, 31080 holes, 31110 holes, 31140 holes, 31170 holes, 31200 holes, 31230 holes, 31260 holes, 31290 holes, 31320 holes, 31350 holes, 31380 holes, 31410 holes, 31440 holes, 31470 holes, 31500 holes, 31530 holes, 31560 holes, 31590 holes, 31620 holes, 31650 holes, 31680 holes, 31710 holes, 31740 holes, 31770 holes, 31800 holes, 31830 holes, 31860 holes, 31890 holes, 31920 holes, 31950 holes, 31980 holes, 32010 holes, 32040 holes, 32070 holes, 32100 holes, 32130 holes, 32160 holes, 32190 holes, 32220 holes, 32250 holes, 32280 holes, 32310 holes, 32340 holes, 32370 holes, 32400 holes, 32430 holes, 32460 holes, 32490 holes, 32520 holes, 32550 holes, 32580 holes, 32610 holes, 32640 holes, 32670 holes, 32700 holes, 32730 holes, 32760 holes, 32790 holes, 32820 holes, 32850 holes, 32880 holes, 32910 holes, 32940 holes, 32970 holes, 33000 holes, 33030 holes, 33060 holes, 33090 holes, 33120 holes, 33150 holes, 33180 holes, 33210 holes, 33240 holes, 33270 holes, 33300 holes, 33330 holes, 33360 holes, 33390 holes, 33420 holes, 33450 holes, 33480 holes, 33510 holes, 33540 holes, 33570 holes, 33600 holes, 33630 holes, 33660 holes, 33690 holes, 33720 holes, 33750 holes, 33780 holes, 33810 holes, 33840 holes, 33870 holes, 33900 holes, 33930 holes, 33960 holes, 33990 holes, 34020 holes, 34050 holes, 34080 holes, 34110 holes, 34140 holes, 34170 holes, 34200 holes, 34230 holes, 34260 holes, 34290 holes, 34320 holes, 34350 holes, 34380 holes, 34410 holes, 34440 holes, 34470 holes, 34500 holes, 34530 holes, 34560 holes, 34590 holes, 34620 holes, 34650 holes, 34680 holes, 34710 holes, 34740 holes, 34770 holes, 34800 holes, 34830 holes, 34860 holes, 34890 holes, 34920 holes, 34950 holes, 34980 holes, 35010 holes, 35040 holes, 35070 holes, 35100 holes, 35130 holes, 35160 holes, 35190 holes, 35220 holes, 35250 holes, 35280 holes, 35310 holes, 35340 holes, 35370 holes, 35400 holes, 35430 holes, 35460 holes, 35490 holes, 35520 holes, 35550 holes, 35580 holes, 35610 holes, 35640 holes, 35670 holes, 35700 holes, 35730 holes, 35760 holes, 35790 holes, 35820 holes, 35850 holes, 35880 holes, 35910 holes, 35940 holes, 35970 holes, 36000 holes, 36030 holes, 36060 holes, 36090 holes, 36120 holes, 36150 holes, 36180 holes, 36210 holes, 36240 holes, 36270 holes, 36300 holes, 36330 holes, 36360 holes, 36390 holes, 36420 holes, 36450 holes, 36480 holes, 36510 holes, 36540 holes, 36570 holes, 36600 holes, 36630 holes, 36660 holes, 36690 holes, 36720 holes, 36750 holes, 36780 holes, 36810 holes, 36840 holes, 36870 holes, 36900 holes, 36930 holes, 36960 holes, 36990 holes, 37020 holes, 37050 holes, 37080 holes, 37110 holes, 37140 holes, 37170 holes, 37200 holes, 37230 holes, 37260 holes, 37290 holes, 37320 holes, 37350 holes, 37380 holes, 37410 holes, 37440 holes, 37470 holes, 37500 holes, 37530 holes, 37560 holes, 37590 holes, 37620 holes, 37650 holes, 37680 holes, 37710 holes, 37740 holes, 37770 holes, 37800 holes, 37830 holes, 37860 holes, 37890 holes, 37920 holes, 37950 holes, 37980 holes, 38010 holes, 38040 holes, 38070 holes, 38100 holes, 38130 holes, 38160 holes, 38190 holes, 38220 holes, 38250 holes, 38280 holes, 38310 holes, 38340 holes, 38370 holes, 38400 holes, 38430 holes, 38460 holes, 38490 holes, 38520 holes, 38550 holes, 38580 holes, 38610 holes, 38640 holes, 38670 holes, 38700 holes, 38730 holes, 38760 holes, 38790 holes, 38820 holes, 38850 holes, 38880 holes, 38910 holes, 38940 holes, 38970 holes, 39000 holes, 39030 holes, 39060 holes, 39090 holes, 39120 holes, 39150 holes, 39180 holes, 39210 holes, 39240 holes, 39270 holes, 39300 holes, 39330 holes, 39360 holes, 39390 holes, 39420 holes, 39450 holes, 39480 holes, 39510 holes, 39540 holes, 39570 holes, 39600 holes, 39630 holes, 39660 holes, 39690 holes, 39720 holes, 39750 holes, 39780 holes, 39810 holes, 39840 holes, 39870 holes, 39900 holes, 39930 holes, 39960 holes, 39990 holes, 40020 holes, 40050 holes, 40080 holes, 40110 holes, 40140 holes, 40170 holes, 40200 holes, 40230 holes, 40260 holes, 40290 holes, 40320 holes, 40350 holes, 40380 holes, 40410 holes, 40440 holes, 40470 holes, 40500 holes, 40530 holes, 40560 holes, 40590 holes, 40620 holes, 40650 holes, 40680 holes, 40710 holes, 40740 holes, 40770 holes, 40800 holes, 40830 holes, 40860 holes, 40890 holes, 40920 holes, 40950 holes, 40980 holes, 41010 holes, 41040 holes, 41070 holes, 41100 holes, 41130 holes, 41160 holes, 41190 holes, 41220 holes, 41250 holes, 41280 holes, 41310 holes, 41340 holes, 41370 holes, 41400 holes, 41430 holes, 41460 holes, 41490 holes, 41520 holes, 41550 holes, 41580 holes, 41610 holes, 41640 holes, 41670 holes, 41700 holes, 41730 holes, 41760 holes, 41790 holes, 41820 holes, 41850 holes, 41880 holes, 41910 holes, 41940 holes, 41970 holes, 42000 holes, 42030 holes, 42060 holes, 42090 holes, 42120 holes, 42150 holes, 42180 holes, 42210 holes, 42240 holes

sport

What next for Eric?

Ten possible new professions for the abdicated King of Old Trafford
Guy Hodgson investigates



Credentials: Astounding. Arthur Rimbaud, the poet he hugely admires, hung up his pen at an early age with the words "I'm not into that any more". Which, give or take a little, was what Cantona said in his retirement statement: "I always planned to retire at the top." Rimbaud toured Africa; Eric may yet do so with an All Stars XI.

Prospects: Not promising. Modern poets are an acquired taste, but Cantona's words are not so much difficult as incomprehensible. The football world may hang on to every syllable, but then it also listens to Winnie Jones.



Credentials: Five Premierships, two doubles, 21 French caps... Need I go on? The man is about as qualified as he could be, given the rider that brilliant footballers rarely make brilliant managers.

Prospects: Has expressed an interest in coaching and his work with the youngsters at Old Trafford has been exemplary, but whether he would find the routine to his liking is another matter. The

1,000th question on Ryan Giggs's hamstring might pall after a while. Management is a possibility, but more likely in charge of a theatre or acting company.



Credentials: Is Naomi Campbell good on the catwalk? Has posed for Manchester United, modelled for Paco Rabanne and made the up-turned collar, which was last paraded successfully by Neville Chamberlain, an essential fashion item.

Prospects: He would have half of Paris craving him if he became a clothes horse. The man sells things faster than his dummies and Old Trafford will be the poorer, literally, for not selling umpteen million No 7s next season.



Credentials: See management. The most prolific winner of prizes in England, he would walk into any team in the Premiership that did not have Juninho in it. Which might be a clue to his leaving Old Trafford.

Prospects: Has retired twice before and on each occasion missed the roar of the crowd. On those occasions, however, his decision was made in haste, whereas this one seems to have been taken in the leisure hours since United were knocked out of the European Cup. Nevertheless, it is not beyond the bounds of credibility to see headlines next autumn proclaiming: "The King is back".



Credentials: Nil? You do not get far without displaying your work and so far Cantona's has been kept under wraps. "I've not seen a single painting," Harold Riley, the Salford artist fa-

mous for his sporting portraits, said. "I couldn't comment on his ability."

Prospects: Professionally none, but as an amateur, possibly essential.

"Painting is a very singular activity," Riley said, "and in him I think it was a release." More likely to be a subject, as in Michael Browne's "The Art Of The Game".



Credentials: When did he stop? From the moment he swaggered on to an English football field with Leeds United he has put on a performance. Apart from that his straight roles include Nike adverts, and the film "Le Bonheur Est Dans Le Pré", which the Manchester Evening News described as a "delightful French comedy".

Prospects: "He would no more expect to fill a leading role than expect Kenneth Branagh to play centre-forward for Manchester United," Terence Blacker, joint author of "The Meaning of Cantona", said. There again, they said Ken would never play Henry V on film.



Credentials: Again, impressive. No single action gave him more of a profile than Cantona's over-literal adherence to the Let's Kick Out Racism campaign at Crystal Palace. On the basis of any publicity being good publicity...

Prospects: Nil. The British Council of Chinese Martial Arts found the Selhurst Park incident disgraceful and that was just his technique. "No style, no balance, no authority" as Alan Hansen might have said. The idea is to immobilise your opponent, not risk breaking your back on an advertising hoarding.



Credentials: None, but, to ask a philosophical question, who has? Any man who can write "An artist, in my eyes, is anyone who can lighten up a room" has a chance of being described as a philosopher. Or pretentious.

Prospects: Outstanding. Cantona at least brought the subject into the public arena and has even been paid to issue his profundities (sic) in television adverts. If the world listens when you issue such waffle as "When the seagulls follow the trawler...", then anything is possible.

Credentials: Impeccable. For four years Manchester and beyond has spoken of a French king, bemusing Paris, who thought it had lost got rid of the breed in 1848. If you want your monarch to come ready equipped with hauteur, however, then Cantona is your man. One might quibble about his past behaviour but largesse has never stopped the Duchess of York.

Prospects: Poor. If you cannot command a place in the French national team, what chance of commanding a country. One plus is his ability to lose his head; his compatriots appreciate that in their monarchs.



Credentials: See... martial arts and philosophy.

Prospects: Are you kidding? Half the fishermen in Britain are fighting verbal and legal wars with their counterparts from the Continent. The last thing Europe's seas need is another trawlerman.



'You're a long time finished,' Taylor tells Cantona Gullit wants to hang on to Vialli

CHRIS MAUME

Senior football figures were queuing yesterday to urge Eric Cantona to think long and hard about his decision to retire.

"I am very shocked," Gordon Taylor, chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, said. "In football you are a long time finished. Eric is only 30

and I feel he still has three or four years left in the game. I hope he would reconsider his position."

"He is a very strong character and tends to act on the spur of the moment, on impulse, and perhaps he may have done so again. Football will be the loser if he has made his final decision."

"He has certainly brought colour to the game as well as some controversy. But that should not overshadow his achievements in this country."

Ruud Gullit, the manager of FA Cup-winners Chelsea, believes the Frenchman might change his mind. "I think 31 is young to retire, but obviously you have to respect his decision," said Gullit, in Hong Kong with his team for today's friendly against South China. "But maybe there is still a possibility he will withdraw his decision, so we will just have to wait till he comes out himself and explains the reasons why he wants to stop."

In France, the man who discovered Cantona and offered him his first professional contract in 1983, also refused to accept that his erstwhile protégé had irrevocably called it a day.

"I'm not sure that he is quitting," Auxerre's coach, Guy Roux, said. "Big stars bid farewell more than once. It's one of his first goodbyes. I'm sure there will be an encore. I will wait for his departure to be confirmed, as I'm used to surprises with Cantona."

Alex Ferguson was looking ahead yesterday, saying he wanted to sign up to three new players. Speaking on a visit to Belfast, he said: "We had plans before Eric made his announcement and we will continue with those plans. We are going to try and add a couple of players, maybe even three now, to our squad."

John Moncur has had more than one brush with Eric Cantona, but now finds himself with a desirable souvenir.

The West Ham midfielder, whose stamping by the Frenchman three years ago led to Cantona's first red card in England three years ago, persuaded Cantona to part with his shirt at the end of last Sunday's game at Manchester United, and Sotheby's say the shirt would generate plenty of interest.

"There would certainly be a big demand for it if the shirt came up for sale," a spokesman for the auction house said.

Moncur may be the owner of Cantona's last shirt in competitive football, but the Frenchman presented ex-Coventry defender David Buss with a memento of his own last week.

Cantona ended his career by scoring twice in the former Coventry defender's testimonial on Friday. He then signed his shirt and handed it to Buss, who was forced to retire, after being badly injured in a match against United 13 months ago.

When Cantona told Ferguson that he was retiring, he said he still wanted to play at Highfield Road. "The fact that he was determined to turn out in David's testimonial, knowing he was retiring, does him immense credit," Buss's agent, Murdo Mackay, said.

"He is a lovely man and he took the game seriously. It wasn't a walk in the park by any means. David was very moved that he signed his shirt and handed it to him. He was extremely supportive in the months that followed David's injury and was one of a number of United players, who visited him in hospital."

"Eric came up to me after the match and thanked me personally for arranging the testimonial. I'll be writing to him just to let him know how much we appreciated what he has done for David - and football in general." Mackay now plans to market videos of the game.

ALAN NIXON

Ruud Gullit, the Chelsea manager, yesterday told his Italian striker Gianluca Vialli he was still wanted at Stamford Bridge.

Gullit, who has taken his FA Cup winners to Hong Kong to give the players the chance to "chill out", said the former Juventus player could yet make his mark at the club. "Nobody at this club has to leave. We want everybody to stay, that counts for Vialli and everyone, and everybody at this club has a fair chance," Gullit said.

The Chelsea team, who suffered in the heat and humidity of Wembley on Saturday, will have worse to contend with in Hong Kong where they play an exhibition today against the local champions, South China.

Thunderstorms have been rumbling and humidity was up to 93 per cent.

Kenny Dalglish has made a £1.5m offer to his old club Blackburn Rovers to take the goalkeeper Shay Given to Newcastle United. Dalglish wants to sign the Republic of Ireland prospect now and avoid a price war with his former employer Jack Walker.

Newcastle are also ready to throw in a further £500,000 in instalments, based on appearances, in the hope of pushing the deal through quickly.

Dalglish wants to sign Given this week as he adds to his squad for next season with deals for Dane Jon Dahl Thomasson and Georgian Temur Ketsbaia also sealed.

Rovers are resigned to losing Given at the end of his contract. He is not willing to stay any longer as cover for Tim Flowers.

Relegated Nottingham Forest have put the Dutchman Bryan Roy and the Croatian

Nikola Jerkan up for sale. The unsettled pair, both still under contract, have decided to leave the City Ground, after discussing their futures with new manager, Dave Bassett.

John Rudge, the Port Vale manager, is having talks with the Oldham captain, Craig Fleming, about a £250,000 transfer.

Caspian, the owners of Leeds United, have been chosen as preferred developers for a new multi-purpose arena integrated with a redeveloped West Stand at the club's Elland Road stadium.

The Caspian development is for an arena seating 13,000 spectators that could stage pop and classical music concerts, family shows, conferences and exhibitions and sporting events such as ice hockey and basketball.

The new West Stand will increase the capacity at Elland Road to 45,000 from the current 40,000.

AA
JOIN NOW FROM
JUST £40
To join, call free now on
0800 444 445
and ask for extension 6172.
Immediate cover available.

مكتبة من الامارات

Lloyd lets his bat do the talking

Adam Szreter meets the Lancashire player whose fine form has won another chance to establish himself in the England cricket team

On Thursday at Headingley the latest new era in England's international fortunes starts off with the first one-day international. Call it the ECB era, the Tesco era, the Graveney era, what you will, but it will still be England versus Australia.

Over the weekend the youthful new selection panel, headed by David Graveney, sat down to perform their first meaningful work of the summer by picking the England squad for the three games. As last year, the shackles of convention have been thrown off to a degree, with some imaginative choices. None more so than Graham Lloyd.

Lloyd did not do himself justice when he played in two one-day internationals against Pakistan last season, but the way he has started this year suggests the selectors are right to give him another chance. Regarded by many as one of the best attacking batsmen in the country, at 27 Lloyd is at last finding some consistency.

It has been a long struggle to break into Lancashire's star-studded batting line-up on a regular basis. With a father who happens to have played for Lancashire and England with considerable success, and who is now the England coach, it is perhaps understandable that Lloyd has taken his time to come into his own.

He toured Australia with England A in 1992-93, scoring two centuries, but the two seasons that followed were disappointing. Last summer, though,

his first-class average was touching 50 – not bad for a so-called one-day specialist. "It was my first good season for quite a while, really, and it was much needed," he said.

A run of low scores in this season's Benson and Hedges Cup coincided with Lancashire relinquishing their grip on a trophy they have held for two years, but Lloyd has more than compensated for that. He started with a ferocious assault on Yorkshire in the pre-season Roses friendly, scoring 225; he equalled Lancashire's Sunday League record of 134 against Durham, after a century against them in the Championship; and he hit 81 against Derbyshire in his other Sunday outing.

"It is certainly the best start I have made to a season," he said. "I couldn't have wished for better, although I would have traded a few runs in the friendly game for a few in the B&H."

Born and bred in Accrington, Lloyd learnt his cricket at the local club his father played for, having been sent to a non-cricket playing secondary school. "That's not so unusual because not many comprehensive schools do actually play cricket," he said. "So it's up to all cricketers who go to those schools to go to local clubs to play there. We had two or three games at school, but it was nothing compared to the grammar schools."

Lloyd's commitment to his native county is almost as abiding as his renowned penchant for the greyhounds, but a chip

off the old block he is not. Dad is so forthright that the English Cricket Board are to appoint a press officer to help journalists with their enquiries at future press conferences. Lloyd Jr prefers to let his willow do the talking, but he is happy to explain how things go between father and son.

"They don't go much really, I don't see that much of him. I've only seen him once since he got back from his tour and we spoke on the phone just socially. We talk about other things and a bit of cricket, but I see him as the England coach and not my father."

"To me there's no problem at all, it's how other people perceive it. Every now and then someone will say, 'You'll never be as good as your Dad' or something, but it doesn't bother me and I don't think it bothers him in the slightest. If it does come down to it, favouritism, that does annoy me and it probably annoys him as well."

Despite what Lloyd says, it is hard to ignore the fact that his own form picked up last season, when his father was no longer coach at the club. Could it have been a sense of release? "That might be just a coincidence, there might be more in it, I don't know," he says.

Lloyd is full of praise for his father's successor at Old Trafford, the Australian Dave What-

more, despite the county's relatively poor start to the season. "He's fitted in really well with us at Lancs. We had a good two weeks over in South Africa getting to know him, and he lets the players play how they feel best to suit them. And in my case that's an attacking sort of game and he's quite happy with it."

Does it irritate him to be labelled a one-day specialist? "It doesn't irritate me. It's nice to be labelled as a specialist at something rather than nothing. My game is probably more suited to one-day cricket than the longer game so I don't mind it at all really."

And goals for this season? "To win a couple of trophies

with Lancs again, and it would be nice for the club to do well in the Championship. For me personally it would be to play every game for the county and take anything else that comes along."

Could he possibly mean a place in England's XI at Headingley on Thursday? "Maybe, I really have no idea. At the start of the season I wasn't even thinking about it. It wasn't even up for debate, but I've had a good start to the season so who knows? It was an enjoyable week last time I played for England and it would be nice to play again, but it's out of my hands is that so we'll have to see."

To win a couple of trophies



Graham Lloyd may now be developing the consistency to complement his attacking ability

Photograph: Empics

Setback for Henman

Tennis

Tim Henman, the British No 1 last night, vowed to return to the practice courts immediately following his second early exit from a tournament in successive weeks.

The world No 17 slumped 6-4, 6-3 to the Netherlands' Sjeng Schalkie in the first round of the Raiffeisen Grand Prix in St Polten, Austria, less than a week after being beaten in the Italian Open second round by an Italian qualifier, Davide Scaia.

"I think in the next five or six days it will be pretty important to put in some practice time," said Henman, who was the fourth seed in St Polten.

"I don't think I spent enough time on the practice court after my operation. That's something I need to do after missing about six weeks of the tour. That's a lot of practice time."

"Hopefully when I get to Paris, I will be able to spend a

few hours each day trying to regain my confidence."

Henman has been seeded 15th for the French Open, where seedings are based on the ATP rankings, after Boris Becker and Todd Martin withdrew. Henman rose one place in the rankings issued yesterday because the Ukrainian Andrei Medvedev lost points after his first-round exit in Rome, slipping below Henman – from 17 to 20.

Greg Rusedski, the British No 2, beaten 6-4, 6-4 by Thomas Nydahl of Sweden in the final qualifying round at St Polten yesterday, has dropped two places to No 41 in the rankings.

Rusedski should have been in the main draw, but failed to enter in time and had to play in the qualifying competition.

There were no official reasons for Becker's withdrawal from the French Open, but the 29-year-old's season has been hampered by a wrist injury which allowed him to play in only two tournaments in the past three months: in Monte Carlo and Hamburg.

Goodway confirmed as Paris coach

Rugby League

DAVE HADFIELD

Andy Goodway has been confirmed as the new coach of Paris St-Germain, who are one place from the foot of the European Super League.

Goodway, dismissed by Oldham last month, turned down a chance to take charge last season, but has now accepted the challenge of taking over from Peter Mulholland, who was sacked two weeks ago.

"I realise I am taking on a club in a lowly position, but I am confident of turning things around for them," Goodway, who is on a family holiday in Spain, said. "We have lost a number of games narrowly during the first half of the season."

A board meeting in Paris on Saturday – attended by the co-opted directors from the Rugby League, Maurice Lindsay and Harry Jepson – decided to offer him his new job.

Goodway will return in time to watch his new side at home to London Broncos on Bank Holiday Monday. After that, he will take over a squad largely composed of Australians. His first problem could be the extended absence of one of them, as Paul Evans faces the disciplinary committee on Thursday after being sent off for a high tackle for the second time this season.

Wigan's shareholders will vote tonight on whether the club's chairman and vice-chairman, Jack Robinson and Tom Rathbone, should be sacked. The Shareholders' Action Group wants to vote the two men out of office and stop the sale of Central Park to a supermarket chain.

Officials are investigating an incident in Sunday's match at Halifax when the referee, Steve Ganson, was attacked by a fan who leaped over a fence and confronted Ganson after he had awarded a try to Wigan. The man was arrested and has been banned from Thrum Hall.

SPORTING DIGEST

Hightown secure third place

Hockey

Berliner came from behind to beat HGC 3-1 and win the women's European Cup championship yesterday, while England's Hightown finished third, writes Bill Colwell from Wassenaar, Netherlands.

Hightown twice came from behind to overcome Glasgow Western 5-3 in a game which had the traditional frisson of any Anglo-Scottish contest. Glasgow's Sue MacDonald, who will play for Slough next season, opened the goal scoring spree in the ninth minute.

With the game evenly poised

at 2-2, Hightown's Lucy Newcombe, who had opened the scoring for the Mercysiders, missed two chances but Yana Williams put them ahead five minutes into the second half.

MacDonald scored her second to level at 3-3 before Linda Carr, Hightown's general in defence, converted her second penalty stroke to put Hightown back into the lead. Michelle Lip-trot, playing in place of the injured Maggie Soyave, cemented the game for Hightown with her first goal of the tournament.

HGC, the host club, ended a nine-year run of German victories when they beat Har-

vestehuder from Hamburg 4-3 in an exciting men's final.

After the Dutch had rushed into a four-goal lead, thanks to a hat-trick from the Olympic striker, Bram Lomans, the Germans got their penalty corner drill going with Kai Holenstein scoring at their 15th attempt. He went on to complete his hat-trick in a dramatic final 10 minutes with the Dutch reduced to 10 men by the temporary suspension of Marc Delissen.

Hightown: C. Reed; I. Carr; M. Morton; C. Gilbert; K. White; J. Aspin; F. Lee; M. Lyndon; L. Newcombe; T. Collier (capt); Y. Williams. Glasgow Western: T. Reed; L. Stumock; J. Bailey; M. Cullen (capt); S. MacDonald; M. Wain; A. Morgan; J. Lachlan; G. Crawford; S. McDonald; W. Fraser. Substitutes: A. Davidson; G. Souter; E. Ritchie. Har-

Tonkov takes over lead in the Giro

Cycling

Pavel Tonkov threw down the challenge to those intent on preventing him from winning the Giro d'Italia for the second successive year with a dominant performance in the individual time trial that formed yesterday's third stage.

The Russian completed the mostly uphill, 18-kilometre (11.2-mile) dash from Santarcangelo to San Marino in 31min 42sec. His compatriot Eugeni Berzin, the 1994 Giro winner and a time-trial specialist, was second fastest, 21 seconds back.

That set up what is likely to be an ongoing duel throughout the 22-stage event, with Berzin just one second behind Tonkov in the overall standings.

"If I'd known I was just one second behind, I would have worked harder at the end," Berzin said.

Tonkov, who tuned up for his defence by winning the Tour de Romandie earlier this month, said: "I hoped to get a result like this today. It's important looking ahead to rest of the Giro."

Italy's Roberto Petito was third yesterday, 32 seconds behind Tonkov, and is third overall.

Australian rules

AFL: Richmond 18.11 (151) at West Coast Eagles 9.13 (67)

Badminton

SUDAMBAH CUP WORLD TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP (Singapore) Group 6A: Sri Lanka 4, Thailand 2; Group 6B: South Africa 3, Indonesia 2; Group 6C: South Africa 3, Indonesia 2; Group 6D: South Africa 3, Indonesia 2.

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Cleveland 8, Toronto 6; Detroit 6, Kansas City 5; Minnesota 7, Boston 5; Texas 4, New York Yankees 2; Anaheim 5, Milwaukee 4; Chicago White Sox 10, Oakland 4; Baltimore 6, Seattle 1.

National League

MANCHESTER: Manchester 7, Los Angeles 4; Philadelphia 5, Houston 3; Florida 5, Pittsburgh 3; 100 Ingleton, New York 10, Colorado 4; Cincinnati 5, San Diego 3; Chicago Cubs 5, San Francisco 3; Atlanta 5, St Louis 1.

Basketball

Karl Malone, the Utah Jazz power forward, edged Michael Jordan, the Chicago Bulls star guard, for the NBA's Most Valuable Player Award on Sunday.

The Miami Heat came back from 3-1 down in the series to beat the New York Knicks 101-90 on Sunday to advance to the Eastern Conference finals. The defending champions, Chicago Bulls, will host the Heat tonight for the conference finals.

Cricket

RED STRIPE CUP (third day of four): Chester-le-Street, North: Guyanese 257 and 100-4; Northants 71, A. Harrell 62; Lancashire 222 and 100-4; Warwickshire 155; Jamaica 225 and 98-4; St Kitts 55.

Cycling

GIRO D'ITALIA (third stage): 1. P. Tonkov (Rus) 31min 42sec; 2. E. Berzin (Rus) 32min 14sec; 3. R. Petito (Ita) 32min 44sec; 4. L. Stumock (Ger) 33min 10sec; 5. M. Wain (Eng) 33min 10sec; 6. M. Morton (Eng) 33min 10sec; 7. M. Lyndon (Eng) 33min 10sec; 8. M. Reed (Eng) 33min 10sec; 9. M. Aspin (Eng) 33min 10sec; 10. M. Collier (Eng) 33min 10sec.

Equestrianism

Starkist Ghost, who was ridden by Ian Stark at yesterday's Olympic games and

this month's Mitsubishi Badminton Horse Trials, has sustained a leg injury and will probably need to rest for a year. The injury may explain why the horse made five show jumping errors at Badminton, which dropped him from first to 13th place.

Football

Arnold Lever, president of Sheffield United, died in hospital on Saturday evening, aged 74. He had been suffering from leukaemia.

The struggling German First Division side Hamburg have sacked their manager, Felix Magath. Hamburg's league form this season has been poor and a dismal 4-0 home defeat to Cologne on Saturday left them in 15th place, one above the relegation zone.

DUTCH LEAGUE: Feyenoord 2, Twente 1; 34, 30min; 42, 20min; 60, 10min; 70, 10min; 80, 10min; 90, 10min; 100, 10min; 110, 10min; 120, 10min; 130, 10min; 140, 10min; 150, 10min; 160, 10min; 170, 10min; 180, 10min; 190, 10min; 200, 10min; 210, 10min; 220, 10min; 230, 10min; 240, 10min; 250, 10min; 260, 10min; 270, 10min; 280, 10min; 290, 10min; 300, 10min; 310, 10min; 320, 10min; 330, 10min; 340, 10min; 350, 10min; 360, 10min; 370, 10min; 380, 10min; 390, 10min; 400, 10min; 410, 10min; 420, 10min; 430, 10min; 440, 10min; 450, 10min; 460, 10min; 470, 10min; 480, 10min; 490, 10min; 500, 10min; 510, 10min; 520, 10min; 530, 10min; 540, 10min; 550, 10min; 560, 10min; 570, 10min; 580, 10min; 590, 10min; 600, 10min; 610, 10min; 620, 10min; 630, 10min; 640, 10min; 650, 10min; 660, 10min; 670, 10min; 680, 10min; 690, 10min; 700, 10min; 710, 10min; 720, 10min; 730, 10min; 740, 10min; 750, 10min; 760, 10min; 770, 10min; 780, 10min; 790, 10min; 800, 10min; 810, 10min; 820, 10min; 830, 10min; 840, 10min; 850, 10min; 860, 10min; 870, 10min; 880, 10min; 890, 10min; 900, 10min; 910, 10min; 920, 10min; 930, 10min; 940, 10min; 950, 10min; 960, 10min; 970, 10min; 980, 10min; 990, 10min; 1000, 10min; 1010, 10min; 1020, 10min; 1030, 10min; 1040, 10min; 1050, 10min; 1060, 10min; 1070, 10min; 1080, 10min; 1090, 10min; 1100, 10min; 1110, 10min; 1120, 10min; 1130, 10min; 1140, 10min; 1150, 10min; 1160, 10min; 1170, 10min; 1180, 10min; 1190, 10min; 1200, 10min; 1210, 10min; 1220, 10min; 1230, 10min; 1240, 10min; 1250, 10min; 1260, 10min; 1270, 10min; 1280, 10min; 1290, 10min; 1300, 10min; 1310, 10min; 1320, 10min; 1330, 10min; 1340, 10min; 1350, 10min; 1360, 10min; 1370, 10min; 1380, 10min; 1390, 10min; 1400, 10min; 1410, 10min; 1420, 10min; 1430, 10min; 1440, 10min; 1450, 10min; 1460, 10min; 1470, 10min; 1480, 10min; 1490, 10min; 1500, 10min; 1510, 10min; 1520, 10min; 1530, 10min; 1540, 10min; 1550, 10min; 1560, 10min; 1570, 10min; 1580, 10min; 1590, 10min; 1600, 10min; 1610, 10min; 1620, 10min; 1630, 10min; 1640, 10min; 1650, 10min; 1660, 10min; 1670, 10min; 1680, 10min; 1690, 10min; 1700, 10min; 1710, 10min; 1720, 10min; 1730, 10min; 1740, 10min; 1750, 10min; 1760, 10min; 1770, 10min; 1780, 10min; 1790, 10min; 1800, 10min; 1810, 10min; 1820, 10min; 1830, 10min; 1840, 10min; 1850, 10min; 1860, 10min; 1870, 10min; 1880, 10min; 1890, 10min; 1900, 10min; 1910, 10min; 1920, 10min; 1930, 10min; 1940, 10min; 1950, 10min; 1960, 10min; 1970, 10min; 1980, 10min; 1990, 10min; 2000, 10min; 2010, 10min; 2020, 10min; 2030, 10min; 2040, 10min; 2050, 10min; 2060, 10min; 2070, 10min; 2080, 10min; 2090, 10min; 2100, 10min; 2110, 10min; 2120, 10min; 2130, 10min; 2140, 10min; 2150, 10min; 2160, 10min; 2170, 10min; 2180, 10min; 2190, 10min; 2200, 10min; 2210, 10min; 2220, 10min; 2230, 10min; 2240, 10min; 2250, 10min; 2260, 10min; 2270, 10min; 2280, 10min; 2290, 10min; 2300, 10min; 2310, 10min; 2320, 10min; 2330, 10min; 2340, 10min; 2350, 10min; 2360, 10min; 2370, 10min; 2380, 10min; 2390, 10min; 2400, 10min; 2410, 10min; 2420, 10min; 2430, 10min; 2440, 10min; 2450, 10min; 2460, 10min; 2470, 10min; 2480, 10min; 2490, 10min; 2500, 10min; 2510, 10min; 2520, 10min; 2530, 10min; 2540, 10min; 2550, 10min; 2560, 10min; 2570, 10min; 2580, 10min; 2590, 10min; 2600, 10min; 2610, 10min; 2620, 10min; 2630, 10min; 2640, 10min; 2650, 10min; 2660, 10min; 2670, 10min; 2680, 10min; 2690, 10min; 2700, 10min; 2710, 10min; 2720, 10min; 2730, 10min; 2740, 10min; 2750, 10min; 2760, 10min; 2770, 10min; 2780, 10min; 2790, 10min; 2800, 10min; 2810, 10min; 2820, 10min; 2830, 10min; 2840, 10min; 2850, 10min; 2860, 10min; 2870, 10min; 2880, 10min; 2890, 10min; 2900, 10min; 2910, 10min; 2920, 10min; 2930, 10min; 2940, 10min; 2950, 10min; 2960, 10min; 2970, 10min; 2980, 10min; 2990, 10min; 3000, 10min; 3010, 10min; 3020, 10min; 3030, 10min; 3040, 10min; 3050, 10min; 3060, 10min; 3070, 10min; 3080, 10min; 3090, 10min; 3100, 10min; 3110, 10min; 3120, 10min; 3130, 10min; 3140, 10min; 3150, 10min; 3160, 10min; 3170, 10min; 3180, 10min; 3190, 10min; 3200, 10min; 3210, 10min; 3220, 10min; 3230, 10min; 3240, 10min; 3250, 10min; 3260, 10min; 3270, 10min; 3280, 10min; 3290, 10min; 3300, 10min; 3310, 10min; 3320, 10min; 3330, 10min; 3340, 10min; 3350, 10min; 3360, 10min; 3370, 10min; 3380, 10min; 3390, 10min; 3400, 10min; 3410, 10min; 3420, 10min; 3430, 10min; 3440, 10min; 3450, 10min; 3460, 10min; 3470, 10min; 3480, 10min; 3490, 10min; 3500, 10min; 3510, 10min; 3520, 10min; 3530, 10min; 3540, 10min; 3550, 10min; 3560, 10min; 3570, 10min; 3580, 10min; 3590, 10min; 3600, 10min; 3610, 10min; 3620, 10min; 3630, 10min; 3640, 10min; 3650, 10min; 3660, 10min; 3670, 10min; 3680, 10min; 3690, 10min; 3700, 10min; 3710, 10min; 3720, 10min; 3730, 10min; 3740, 10min; 3750, 10min; 3760, 10min; 3770, 10min; 3780, 10min; 3790, 10min; 3800, 10min; 3810, 10min; 3820, 10min; 3830, 10min; 3840, 10min; 3850, 10min; 3860, 10min; 3870, 10min; 3880, 10min; 3890, 10min; 3900, 10min; 3910, 10min; 3920, 10min; 3930, 10min; 3940, 10min; 3950, 10min; 3960, 10min; 3970, 10min; 3980, 10min; 3990, 10min; 4000, 10min; 4010, 10min; 4020, 10min; 4030, 10min; 4040, 10min; 4050, 10min; 4060, 10min; 4070, 10min; 4080, 10min; 4090, 10min; 4100, 10min; 4110, 10min; 4120, 10min; 4130, 10min; 4140, 10min; 4150, 10min; 4160, 10min; 4170, 10min; 4180, 10min; 4190, 10min; 4200, 10min; 4210, 10min; 4220, 10min; 4230, 10min; 4240, 10min; 4250, 10min; 4260, 10min; 4270, 10min; 4280, 10min; 4290, 10min; 4300, 10min; 4310, 10min; 4320, 10min; 4330, 10min; 4340, 10min; 4350, 10min; 4360, 10min; 4370, 10min; 4380, 10min; 4390, 10min; 4400, 10min; 4410, 10min; 4420, 10min; 4430, 10min; 4440, 10min; 4450, 10min; 4460, 10min; 4470, 10min; 4480, 10min; 4490, 10min; 4500, 10min; 4510, 10min; 4520, 10min; 4530, 10min; 4540, 10min; 4550, 10min; 4560, 10min; 4570, 10min; 4580, 10min; 4590, 10min; 4600, 10min; 4610, 10min; 4620, 10min; 4630, 10min; 4640, 10min; 4650, 10min; 4660, 10min; 4670, 10min; 4680, 10min; 4690, 10min; 4700, 10min; 4710, 10min; 4720, 10min; 4730, 10min; 4740, 10min; 4750, 10min; 4760, 10min; 4770, 10min; 4780, 10min; 4790, 10min; 4800, 10min; 4810, 10min; 4820, 10min; 4830, 10min; 4840, 10min; 4850, 10min; 4860, 10min; 4870, 10min; 4880, 10min; 4890, 10min; 4900, 10min; 4910, 10min; 4920, 10min; 4930, 10min; 4940, 10min; 4950, 10min; 4960, 10min; 4970, 10min; 4980, 10min; 4990, 10min; 5000, 10min; 5010, 10min; 502

Cantona a new Kant?

Guy Hodgson on Eric's career options, page 26

sport

Second chance
Graham Lloyd's England challenge, page 27

Wilkinson's plan to groom national coach

GLENN MOORE

Football Correspondent

After a weekend in which the spotlight on overseas players underlined the urgency of his task, Howard Wilkinson yesterday launched the Football Association's crusade to improve the quality of English-born footballers.

Wilkinson, the FA's first technical director, issued an ambitious and largely admirable set of proposals which, if carried through, would change the way that English players are developed beyond all recognition.

The most eye-catching suggestion is that the next national coach should be identified now and taken on to Glenn Hoddle's staff, probably as Under-21 coach.

The most radical proposal is that the professional clubs should have total responsibility for the development of talented young players from the age of eight upwards.

In truth neither of these ideas, nor many of the others, are new. Most Continental clubs

have run youth development for years, while Bertie Vogts and Cesare Maldini succeeded to their current posts as coaches of Germany and Italy after running the Under-21 sides.

What is new is the belief, held by Wilkinson, that the practical will exist to adopt his "Charter for Quality". The FA's much criticised executives are certainly behind him, but one wonders about the ageing backwoodsman on the FA Council who may see their influence under threat.

Wilkinson said they should all be happy with the report, but control of the England Under-15 team is to be taken away from the English Schools FA, while other representative games – run by the ESFA and county FAs – will be greatly curtailed.

The aim is that talented young players should play no more than 30 games per year – mostly for their club academy teams.

"It is a sea change," Wilkinson said. "At the moment the best players play so many games they are sometimes sent home from coaching courses as they are too tired." Wolves' Stephen

Froggatt would agree. He used to play 160 games a year and now suffers from repeated injuries.

All youth coaches are to be better trained and facilities improved. The national school is to close, superseded by similar establishments across the country. A national football centre will be set up with support services dealing with aspects such as the physical and mental welfare of players.

The next national coach – Wilkinson said he had someone in mind – is to be headhunted from January 1998. "Something as important as the national team should not be left in the lurch if the manager ups and aways, as has happened, or the FA dispenses with him," Wilkinson said.

Quite who will be prepared to give up a career in club management to work in Glenn Hoddle's shadow is unclear.

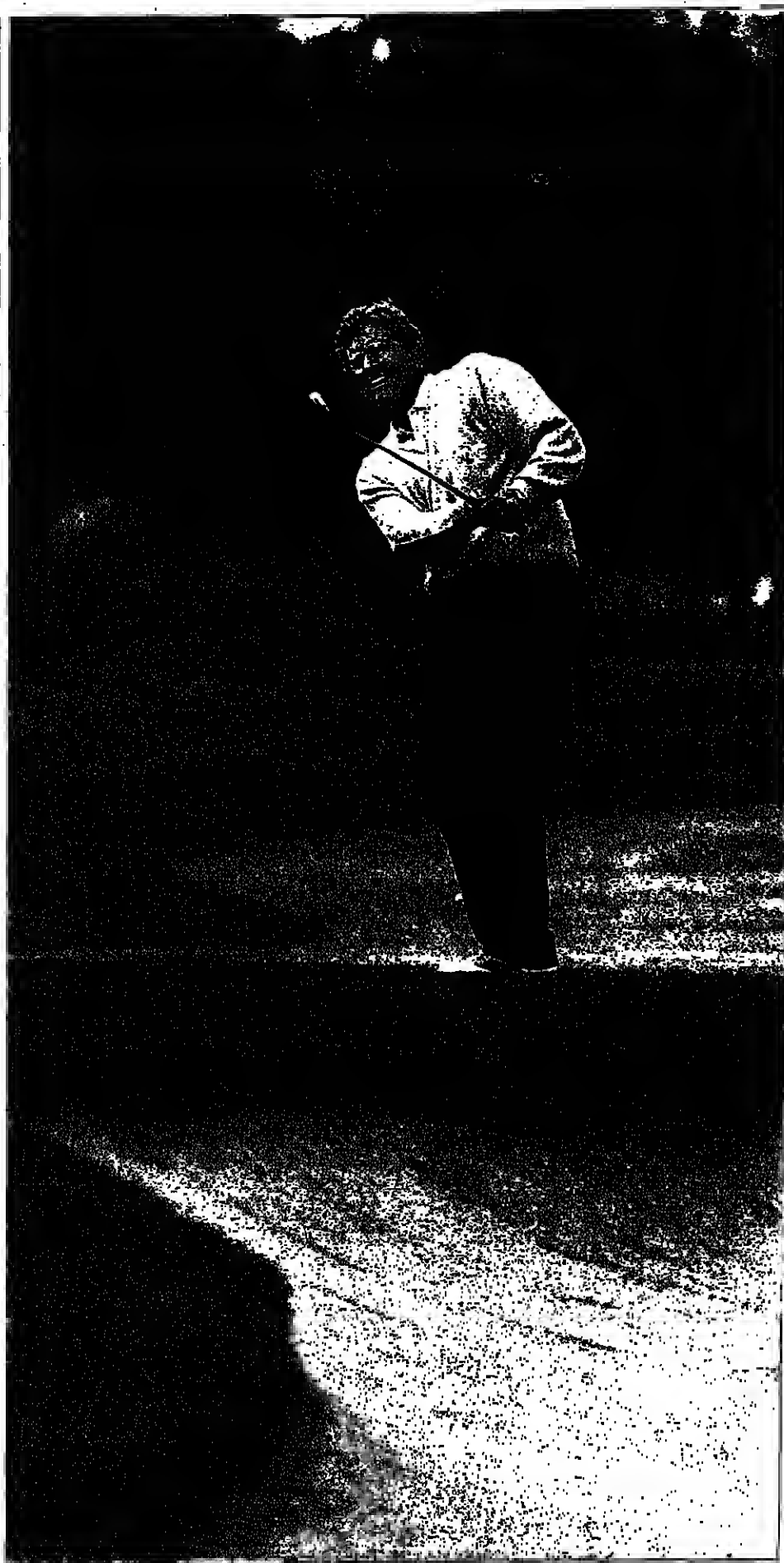
The most obvious omission is the absence of a commitment to impose mandatory qualifications for club managers. This is commonplace on the Continent but appears to have met with strong resistance here. Wilkinson said this was a "red herring" adding that just over 50 per cent of Premiership coaches have qualifications. Which means nearly half of them do not. Levels are higher lower in the league and at youth level.

The other flaw – predictably – concerns money. Premiership clubs can finance academies but lower division ones may struggle to staff and equip them properly – especially as it will be hard to retain players post-Bosman. There was no mention of how this would be overcome.

Coaches at junior levels also need incentives if they are to undertake courses which can be expensive, especially as pay rates are poor or non-existent. The game is awash with money yet Wilkinson was reduced to speaking hopefully of sponsorship.

The proposals are still a huge step in the right direction – if the FA Council pass them. The 90 councillors will debate the report at their summer meeting. Before then there will be considerable lobbying as the executive attempts to persuade the councillors, which has resisted all attempts at overhauling their archaic oligarchy, to accept the charter.

It would be a damning indictment of these men (and one woman) if they reject Wilkinson's exhaustively researched, well meaning and desperately needed proposals. "This is the highest, most exciting and satisfying challenge of my career," Wilkinson said. "There is sufficient will to make change possible. This report has tried to be practical. No one should have a serious objection, no one is trying to take anything away from anybody." We shall see.



Colin Montgomerie chips over a bunker during the Andersen Consulting World Championship at the Buckinghamshire yesterday. Photograph: Robert Hallam

Torrance finds form in his favourite format

Golf

ANDY FARRELL
reports from Denham

Welcome to May madness on the European tour. This is fill your footloose week.

Friday sees the start of the Volvo PGA Championship, with a record £1.1m on offer. Today, the winner of the European qualifier for the Andersen Consulting World Championship will be looking forward to a trip to Arizona where the top prize is \$1m (£625,000). The total purse of \$3,650,000 is the second highest in the world.

Last year's qualifier from these shores was Sam Torrance, who picked up the minimum guarantee of \$300,000 after losing both his matches against Scott Hoch and Hisayuki Sasaki. Torrance has not won much since, but, canny pro that he is, he has run into form at the right moment.

In yesterday's first round, Torrance beat Ian Woosnam 4 and 3. Today he plays Colin Montgomerie, the man he beat 3 and 1 in last year's final, in an all-Irish semi-final. Woosnam did not drop a shot to par round the Buckinghamshire course, but suffered under the matchplay format.

Torrance was one up at the turn and then holed a wedge shot from 69 yards for an eagle at the 11th. He then held a long putt from 44 yards at the

next and another birdie at the 13th put the result beyond doubt. "This is a game of highs and lows and most of this year has been a low," Torrance said. "I feel better and more confident now. I feel I am back in the swing of things and it is all due to hard effort. I always felt it would just come back and I love matchplay golf."

The format is the game's version of head-to-head combat and is all the more interesting for that. In 1984, a young Spaniard holed a wedge shot and chipped in twice to beat a young Scot in the final of the British Amateur Championship. Montgomerie got his revenge yesterday by beating a bogey-free Olazabal 2 and 1 without holding a putt of any consequence.

"My putting has gone to a new level," Monty said. "I didn't know it could go any lower." The rest of his game, he knew, had to be of a higher order and it was. Always ahead from the first, he hit a six-iron to three feet at the 14th and a five-iron to four feet at the 16th.

"This was not really revenge," he added. "It's just great that Jose Maria is back and playing competitively at the highest level. I have had an admiration for him ever since 1984." The previous evening had been spent watching Tiger Woods' latest triumph in America. "He seems to will the ball into the hole," the awed Montgomerie said.

"His desire is unbelievable. His passion takes over on the back nine. We all accept that he's the best player in the world right now and we have to improve beyond what we thought was necessary to compete."

Torrance had placed a small wager on himself. Montgomerie and Constantino Rocca progressing into the next round. The Italian kept him waiting to collect his money as Jesper Parnevik, on his first appearance in Europe this year, escaped from three down with five to play to take the match into extra holes. At the second of these, which was actually the first, Parnevik drove into the water and could not beat Rocca's birdie. Rocca plays Darren Clarke, who was a prolific winner in matchplay events as an amateur in Ireland. A prospective Ryder Cup rookie later this year, where he could be a formidable fourball partner, Clarke made five birdies in beating Bernhard Langer 2 and 1.

THE ANDERSEN CONSULTING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (The Buckinghamshire, Denham) First round: C Montgomerie (GB) to J Moore (Denmark) 5 and 4; S Torrance (GB) to I Woosnam (GB) 4 and 3; D Clarke (GB) to B Langer (GER) 2 and 1; C Rocca (ITA) to J Parnevik (SWE) at 20th.

Sam Torrance, Bernhard Langer and Philip Walton are free to go on using broomhandle putters until at least the year 2000. The Royal and Ancient Club has confirmed it is examining the use of long putters, but changes to the rules of the game are made only every four years and the next will be in the new millennium.

Schumacher's football debut

Motor racing

The old story about the football team being so short of players that their coach driver had to turn out has been given a new twist.

In their drive to raise funds for a new strip, a Swiss Third Division football club might have thought they were pushing their luck asking Michael Schumacher, who has made his debut leading the attack on Sunday.

Despite this efforts to drive them on in the first half, their new centre-forward had to endure a rare taste of defeat. Aubonne, apparently the Marnard of Alpine football, went down 6-1 to Genolier-Begnins. Schumacher, who no doubt will be nicknamed Franzing Horse, ran out of fuel at half-distance.

"His attitude was very good," Aubonne's coach, Michael von Tobler, told the daily *Le Matin*. "But it's difficult to judge his ability after just one half." He had only trained three times, von Tobler said, and "does not know the other players very well yet." Like his rivals on the grand prix circuit, they will probably recognise him best from behind.

Aubonne hope Schumacher, who lives near Lake Geneva, will be able to play for them every other Sunday, but his employers at Ferrari might not be too keen on their world title contender risking being injured.

Grayson will miss Lions first outing

Rugby Union

CHRIS HEWITT
reports from Durban

Rather like John McEnroe's left arm or a darts champion's beer gut, Paul Grayson's right leg is fundamental to his sporting art. Unfortunately for the goal-kicker from Northampton, that appendage is giving him no end of hassle; unfortunately for the Lions, he cannot be considered for the opening salvo of the South African tour against Eastern Province on Saturday.

Grayson sat out all the meaningful sections of yesterday's first-up training session at King's Park, a two-hour stint sweated out in temperatures in the high seventies. "It's not going to get much hotter, apparently," Ian McGeechan, the senior coach, said without the slightest degree of conviction. Most of the Lions went straight from training field to swimming pool without passing Go.

McGeechan was careful not to sound too many alarm bells on the subject of Grayson, one of only two specialist goal-kickers in a squad decidedly lacking in backwash, and the player himself insisted that the muscle strain at the top of his thigh was "almost right". But the unpalatable fact remains that England's first-choice outside-half has not laced up his boots in anger since the middle of March, hardly ideal preparation for the rigours of an eight-week jaunt around Bokkedom.

"Paul's problem is not directly connected with the injury that kept him on the sidelines towards the end of the domestic season, although it's in the same area of his kicking leg," said McGeechan, who also saw Jeremy Davidson, the Irish lock, pick up a neck strain and Alan Tait, the Scottish centre, withdraw from the session with a viral infection. "We don't want to jeopardise his recovery by asking him to do too much too soon."

Given McGeechan's declared policy of giving all 35 players a start in the opening three matches – the games with Border and Western Province follow this weekend's rumble at the Boet Erasmus in Port Elizabeth – Grayson will be under pressure to prove his fitness by the time the Lions reach Cape Town on Thursday week. If he fails, Mike Catt can expect to be

whistled up from England's tour of Argentina.

Martin Johnson, the captain, and his fellow forwards bore the brunt of yesterday's session, mercilessly administered by the Ayatollah of scrummaging, Jim Telfer. The Scottish coach could watch set-piece rehearsals all day long and seemed perfectly prepared to on this occasion as his charges pitted their strength against the latest in designer scrum machines. And how did he rate the session on a scale of one to 10? "Oh, about three. God help the Lions when he asks for some serious effort."

Privately, the Lions believe they can hold, perhaps even dominate, the very best tight units the South Africans have to offer. Their main concern, outside of injuries, is how the big matches will be refereed. To that end, McGeechan lunched yesterday with two of the Springboks' most highly regarded officials, Steve Strydom and Erik Burger, in an effort to get on the inside track.

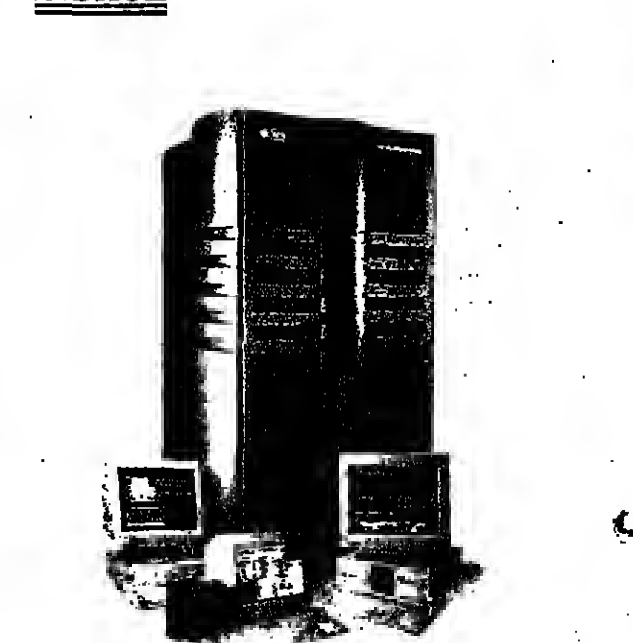
"We want to play positively but with some control and if we end up conceding strings of penalties, it won't do us any good and neither will it benefit the game as a whole," he said. "I'm not being defensive about this, but realistic. We need to understand the philosophy of referees in this part of the world." McGeechan will not have forgotten the experience of Christchurch 1993, when his Lions side lost the opening Test of a three-match series with New Zealand as a direct result of a myopic interpretation of the ruck law by the Australian Brian Kiasiey.

McGeechan learned something else in New Zealand that year; that talented players perform better off the leash than on it. "We will not discourage anyone from being positive on this trip. I don't want the players to feel they are in a strait-jacket; indeed, I want to see us develop a more instinctive style than we managed four years ago. But having said that, I've never been in favour of loose rugby. To play with instinct, you also have to play with self-discipline. Those will be the watchwords on this tour."

Richmond have signed Barry Williams, the Wales and 11-on hooker, from Neath to replace Brian Moore, who retired at the end of the season.

Published by Newspaper Publishing PLC, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL and printed at Mirror Colour Print, St Albans Road, Watford and Herts. Avenue, Oldham. Back issues available from Historic Newspapers, 01988 840370. Tuesday 20 May 1997 Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office

MORSE



Simple.

Today, IT managers are on a mission to simplify computer systems. They need to reduce complexity on the desktop and consolidate the growing number of servers in their companies.

Why they are doing this, and how, is explained in an Executive Briefing published by Morse called "Flexible Server Consolidation".

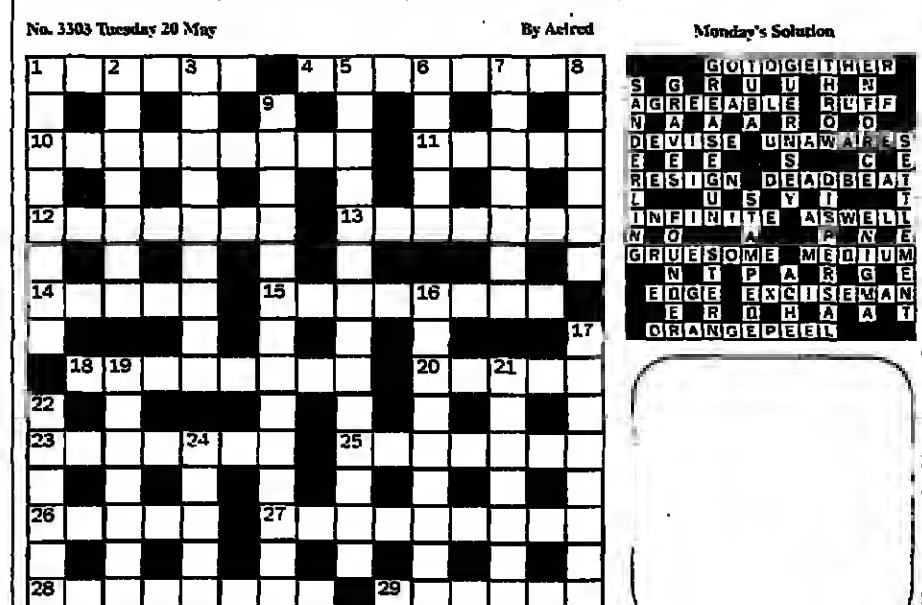
Call us for a free copy.



Morse Computers

0800 22 88 88

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD



- ACROSS
- 1 A way to unknown want of concern (6)
 - 4 Get away to secure a day of adventure (8)
 - 10 Cause of one's rather too burning an interest in things? (9)
 - 11 Search round a familiar place (5)
 - 12 One keeps turning into plant (7)
 - 13 Noble state of party in fanciful realm (7)
 - 14 Spell of work in square with shade (5)
 - 15 Welshman's question on Irish Independence, it's a hit run? (8)
 - 18 Uganda's English dive produced brandy (3,2,5)
 - 20 In French said to indicate more of the same? (5)

- 23 Lunch served round north-east France after passing through it? (7)
 - 25 Plan of diplomacy by one joining Civil Service (7)
 - 26 Taking a chance after day's passed, showing effect of cold? (5)
 - 27 Fat cat maybe in favour of getting healthy always (9)
 - 28 Time for turnips said to have low water variation? (4,4)
 - 29 Bedfordshire's place for accommodation (3,3)
- DOWN
- 1 One American in computer firm gets ovation (8)
 - 2 A leading monk gets one into a kind of argument (1,6)
 - 3 Clumsy had actor's gut hit? (5,6)
 - 5 Perhaps exit in way coach went? (3,9)

- 6 A British house's resistance to hate (5)
- 7 Separate in the manner shown below? (7)
- 8 Lay to rest poor Elton doctor (6)
- 9 Weedy film with insufficient exposure? (14)
- 16 Put right a French male on December night, about one (9)
- 17 Play violin with hrio after one's gone to front of boat (8)
- 19 A chimney in Edinburgh in a bit of corundum (7)
- 21 Priest upset about conservative muscle (7)
- 22 Fellow leaves partisan group's movement (6)
- 24 Time to close? (5)

مكتبة من الرصيد